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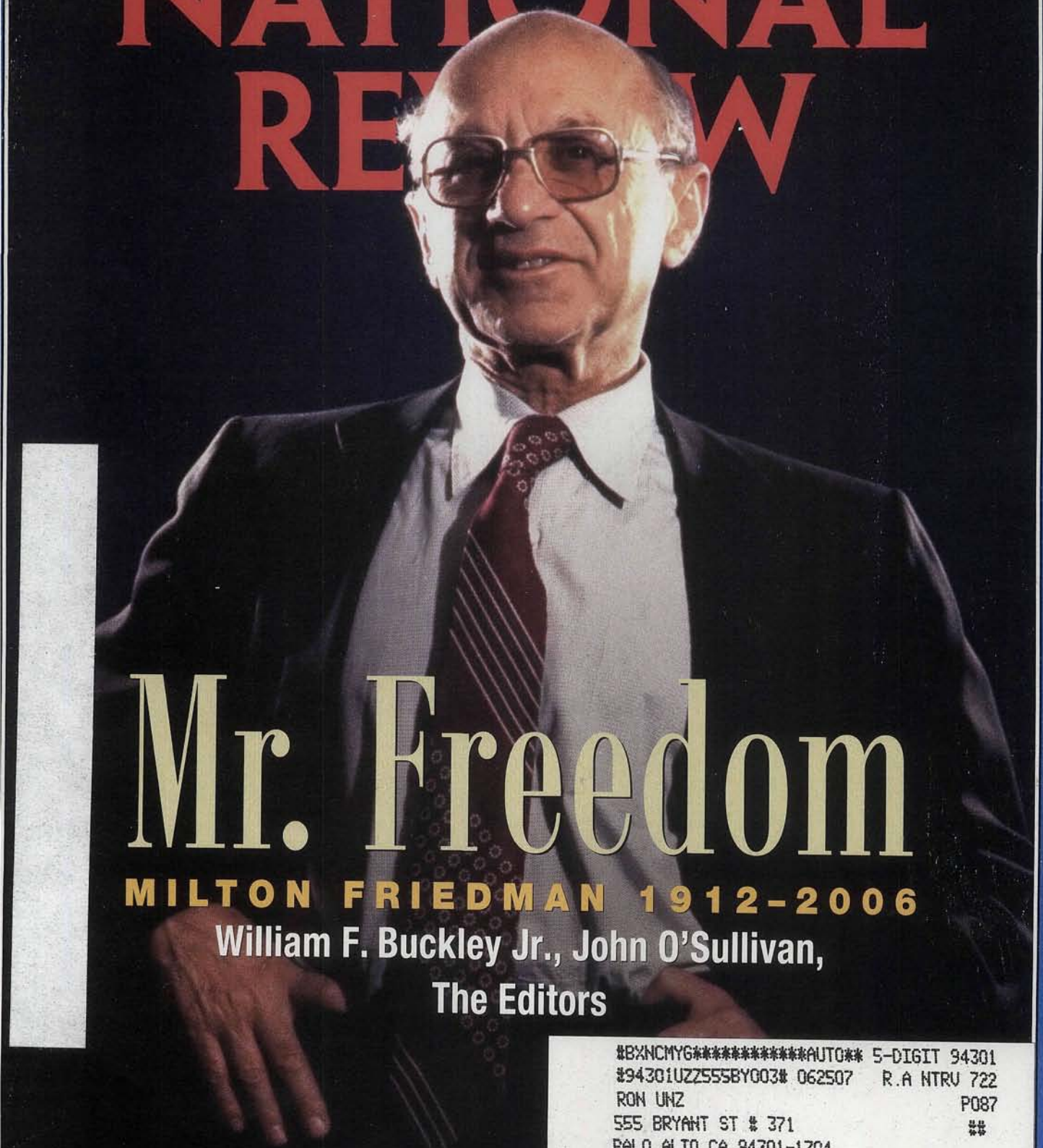
BROOKHISER: The Case for Giuliani

NATIONAL REVIEW



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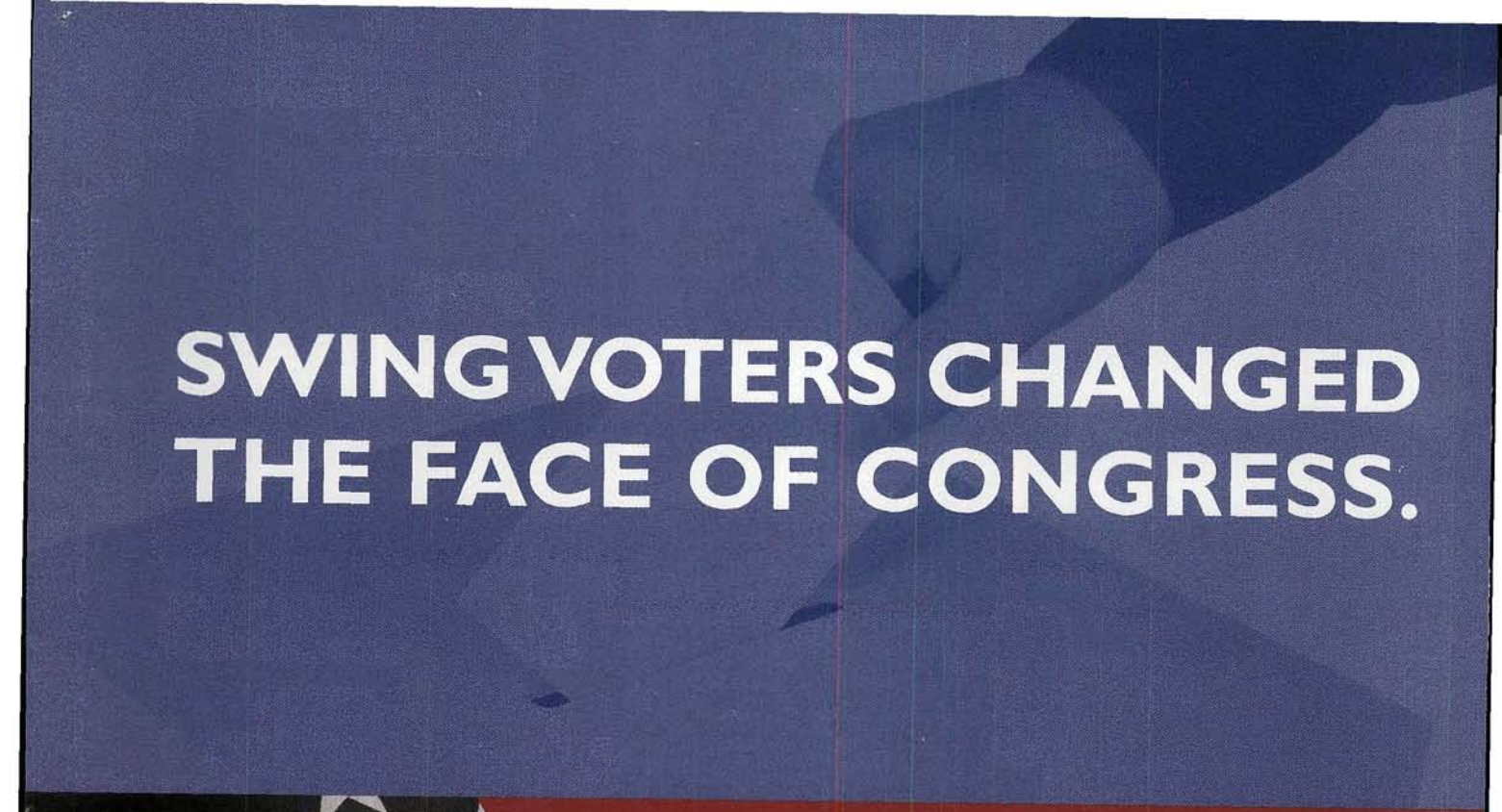

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DECEMBER 18, 2006 VOL. LVIII, NO. 23

NATIONAL REVIEW

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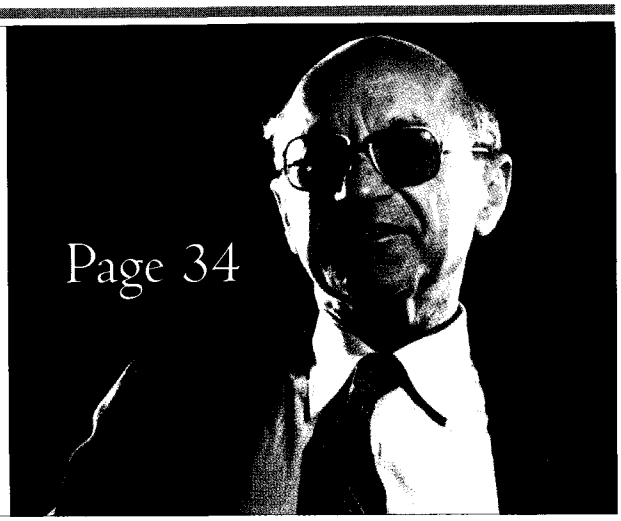
■ COVER STORY

Economist on a White

By the time of his death, Milton Friedman's victory was more or less complete, as the respectful obituaries even in staunchly liberal newspapers conceded. But the campaign to establish (or revive) his classical-liberal ideas had been hard and long. *By John O'Sullivan*



ARTICLES

18 Beware of Bi *by Kate O'Beirne*
What do Democrats mean when they talk up 'bipartisanship'?

20 Blue Dogs Bark *by Byron York*
The role of moderate Dems in a Pelosi House.

24 Damn Yankees *by Jonathan Martin*
The GOP and its Northeast problem.

26 Exit of a Champion *by Jay Nordlinger*
Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich is defeated in Maryland.

29 Bombing Big-Time *by Rob Long*
A comedian works without a writer.

31 Nancy with the Pretty Face *by Florence King*
Speaker Pelosi and other characters of the moment.

34 Economist on a White Horse *by John O'Sullivan*
How Milton Friedman saved the world.

37 A Vote for Rudy *by Richard Brookhiser*
Why Giuliani should be president.

39 Evangelicals for Romney? *by John J. Miller*
A major question of the coming period.

BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

44 Child of the Revolution—*Peter Collier* . . . Intimate Politics: How I Grew Up Red, Fought for Free Speech, and Became a Feminist Rebel, *by Bettina F. Aptheker*

48 Red Like Us—*Ramesh Ponnuru* . . . Building Red America: The New Conservative Coalition and the Drive for Permanent Power, *by Thomas B. Edsall*

49 Before the Fall—*David Klinghoffer* . . . The Emperor's Children, *by Claire Messud*

53 Silver Spoons—*Myrna Blyth* . . . Great Expectations: The Troubled Lives of Political Families, *by Noemie Emery*

54 Film: Tough Guy—Ross Douthat reviews *Casino Royale.*

56 City Desk: The Party—Worthy Institution impresses Richard Brookhiser at Best Restaurant.

SECTIONS

2 Letters
4 The Week
17 Notes & Asides
42 The Long View
43 Help!
49 Poetry
58 On the Right
60 Happy Warrior

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letters to the editor

CONFLICT AND DIAMONDS

In "Bloody Nonsense" (Nov. 20), Jack Jolis writes of the "non-issue of 'blood diamonds.'" He asserts, "If there were not a single diamond produced on the African continent, there would not be one fewer war there, nor one fewer human victim thereof."

He maintains that the majority of diamond-producing countries are free of conflict and that many civil wars in Africa occur in diamond-free countries. But this is trivial: No organization that has worked seriously to stop the bartering of "conflict diamonds" claims that a large fraction of the world's diamond supply comes from conflict areas. It is virtually undisputed that only a sliver of the world's diamonds are "conflict diamonds." The problem is that this sliver still represents tens of millions (if not hundreds of millions) of dollars.

And what do these millions of dollars buy? Not just machetes and AK-47s, as Jolis claims, but, according to a January 2001 U.N. Report, items such as tanks, missiles, artillery, and landmines. The majority of Angolans maimed during the civil war (around 80,000 people) were injured by landmines. People continue to be killed and maimed today. A 2004 BBC report estimated that there were somewhere between 500,000 and 1 million landmines in Angola—three years after the civil war ended.

Jolis is correct on one point—profits from "conflict diamonds" do not supply "the locally grown ganga with which the 'troops' are mostly paid." Rather, those millions of dollars fund high-ranking rebel officials who often live outside their native countries in places such as Belgium and the United States.

M. Elaine Vote
Seattle, Wash.

JACK JOLIS RESPONDS: Virtually all (if not all) of the landmines in Angola are of Soviet origin and were paid for (if they were paid for) by government oil revenues. And any "tanks, missiles, and artillery" that Angola's rebels might have deployed were captured from the government. On the rare occasion that any of this Soviet matériel was bought with diamonds, it was bought from corrupt government officials themselves. Thus, the weapons were already in the conflict—they merely changed hands.

The people who profit most from "blood diamonds" in Africa are the publicity-hounding activist groups, U.N. officials, and Congressional Black Caucus members who perpetuate this myth.

African tyrants, both government and rebel, are no more financed by diamonds than by any other commodity. Corruption is fungible.

RAGING BULL, OR JUST BULL?

In his review of Martin Scorsese's *The Departed* ("Crowd-Pleaser," Nov. 6), Ross Douthat positions *Goodfellas* as the director's "career high." Yet *Raging Bull* is overlooked, despite its obvious virtues. Like *Goodfellas*, it stars Robert DeNiro and Joe Pesci, both of whom deliver Oscar-nominated performances (DeNiro won). At the same time, Scorsese masterfully uses black-and-white and still shots to give the film its wonderful uniqueness—something *Goodfellas* lacks. Perhaps there is no clear pinnacle to Scorsese's long and fine career, but *Raging Bull* must be shown at fault before another movie is put before it.

Andrew Fink
Ypsilanti, Mich.

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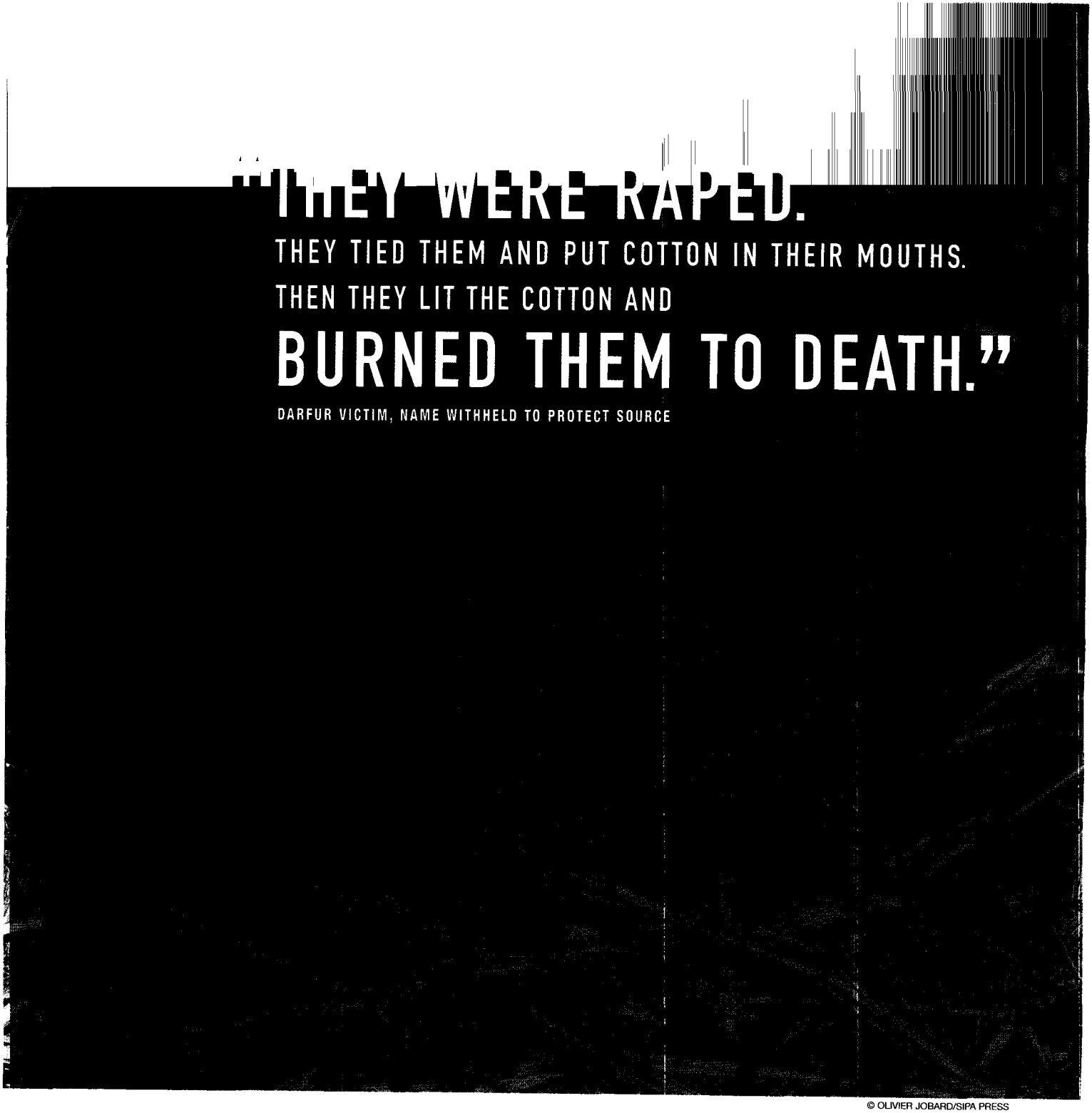
"THEY WERE RAPED.
THEY TIED THEM AND PUT COTTON IN THEIR MOUTHS.
THEN THEY LIT THE COTTON AND
BURNED THEM TO DEATH."
DARFUR VICTIM, NAME WITHHELD TO PROTECT SOURCE

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THE WEEK

■ Admit it: You're grateful Michael Richards isn't a Republican.

■ When old footage that showed Rep. John Murtha nibbling at a bribe dangled by an FBI "sheik" appeared online, the hero of the Iraq resistance was transformed overnight into a dull-witted crook. At least we can say that Murtha's fondness for dubious Arabs is enduring. The House Democratic caucus rejected Murtha in his race for majority leader, in favor of Steny Hoyer, by a vote of 149–86. The Democrats' other dirty would-be leader, Rep. Alcee Hastings, also went down. Hastings was favored to head the Intelligence Committee, until the media and his colleagues began focusing on his past. In the 1980s Hastings, then a federal district judge, was impeached by the House and convicted by the Senate for conspiring to accept bribes. Since both Murtha and Hastings were initially approved by incoming Speaker Nancy Pelosi, their travails are early black marks for her. But they may not be lasting. When Hastings joined Murtha on the sidelines, it was good for the country—and good for the Democratic majority, which made itself cleaner and more effective thereby. Republicans and conservatives still face a long march back.

■ Trent Lott is back in the GOP Senate leadership, as the new minority whip. There are some good arguments for his return: He's a great vote counter and a master of the Senate's arcane ways. Other arguments are less good, but have some merit: The White House unfairly threw Lott under the bus for its own purposes following his Strom Thurmond gaffe; he has paid a steep enough price for a small mistake; it's the Senate's prerogative to declare its independence; etc. But Lott is not what the GOP needs right now. Fair or not, he symbolizes the image that cost the GOP its majority. He is a pork-barrel politician first, last, and forever. He sees being in the Senate leadership as akin to being the recording secretary of the local country club, and his public comments often seem aimed at his colleagues rather than the wider world (he coined that albatross of a phrase "the nuclear option"). Lott's rehabilitation represents justice for him, but not for those to whom falls the task of rebuilding the GOP's shattered majority.

■ Sam Brownback, the Republican from Kansas, is a fine senator: His lifetime voting record, as rated by the American Conservative Union, is 95 percent. On right-to-life issues and the humanitarian aspects of foreign policy—AIDS relief in Africa, assistance to North Korean refugees, etc.—he has established himself as a legislative leader. He played a constructive role in turning back the Supreme Court nomination of Harriet Miers. But now Brownback

A new Holland? *(See page 10.)*

ROMAN GENN

appears to have succumbed to the temptation that all senators seem to face: He's on the verge of running for president. "We're very close with announcements," he said on November 26, appearing on ABC's *This Week*. "I think there is room, on the Republican side, for somebody that's a full-scale conservative." Several other GOP candidates may quarrel with that assessment, and they'll be quick to point out that Brownback supported both the McCain-Feingold campaign-finance law (initially, at least) and the McCain-Kennedy immigration bill. A lot of "full-scale" conservatives opposed both, and vigorously. If Brownback does choose to run, he will no doubt acquit himself honorably. He may also do so irrelevantly. Or worse: He could fracture the conservative base and contribute to the success of a "half-scale" Republican. If Brownback wants to advance conservatism, perhaps he should consider pursuing the governorship of his own state in 2010 and seeing where that leads. He's only 50 years old. Or he could stay right where he is, doing what he's already doing.

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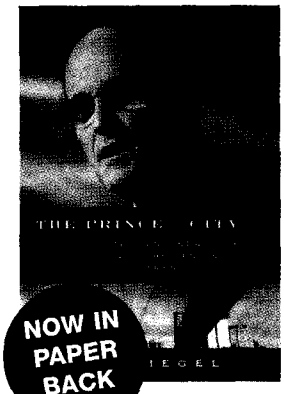


THE PRINCE OF THE CITY

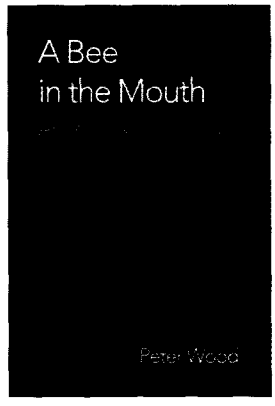
GIULIANI, NEW YORK, AND THE GENIUS OF AMERICAN LIFE

by Fred Siegel | Now in Paperback | December 2006 | ISBN: 1-59403-149-5 | $17.95

The Prince of the City is a fascinating character study of one of America's most charismatic public figures, a history of New York over the last forty years, and a classic inquiry into the issue of how cities thrive or die. Fred Siegel tells a story that culminates with a dramatic account of September 11, 2001, revealing how Giuliani's eight years in office had prepared him and the city to rise to this tragic occasion and how in the aftermath of the attack he became America's Mayor.

A BEE IN THE MOUTH:

ANGER IN AMERICA NOW



by Peter Wood | December 2006 | ISBN: 1-59403-053-7 | $25.95

America has gotten into ugly moods before, but never as today. We now live in a society of irritated division. Why are we so angry? In taking us on a guided tour of American acrimony, Peter Wood traces the roots of anger's triumph in our social and political world. He examines the "liberating" bromides of psychotherapists, the bellicosity of the war between the sexes, the broadsides of the ethnic separatists, and the jeremiads of fundamentalists of all stripes.

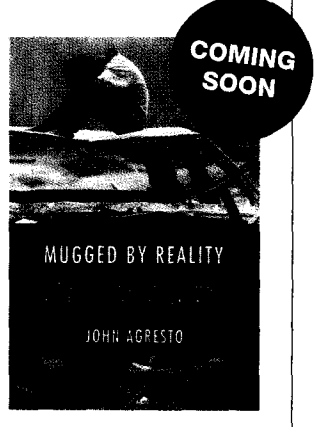
THE FUTURE OF MARRIAGE

by David Blankenhorn | January 2007 | ISBN: 1-59403-081-2 | $25.95

In the current demands of various organizations, Blankenhorn points out, gay and lesbian leaders are not asking for marriage with the adjective "gay" in front of it, but marriage itself. So in that sense, what marriage is and why it matters are ultimately what this debate about the future of marriage is all about. David Blankenhorn answers the 'whats' and the 'whys' of our most important—and troubled—social institution.

MUGGED BY REALITY

THE LIBERATION OF IRAQ AND THE FAILURE OF GOOD INTENTIONS



by John Agresto | February 2007 | ISBN: 1-59403-187-8 | $25.95

John Agresto spent a little over nine months in Iraq. His job was to help Iraq rebuild its once highly regarded education system. As he left Iraq, Agresto was asked by the Pentagon to write a few paragraphs for the future about this formative and transitional time; from those paragraphs *Mugged by Reality* was born.

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THE WEEK...

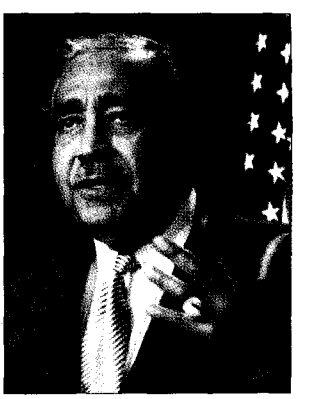
■ Now that Democrats aren't threatened with political irrelevance, they just might be willing to cut a deal on Social Security. Treasury secretary Henry Paulson says he is willing to talk with "no preconditions." Better, we think, to set reciprocal conditions. If the Democrats want to rule out personal accounts, to which they react like vampires to the cross, then Republicans should rule out tax increases too. The most popular liberal proposal of the moment is to extend the payroll taxes to cover all wages, not just the first $90,000 of wages. That's a massive increase in marginal tax rates. It would affect only 6 percent of the workforce in any year, but more than a fifth of workers over the course of their lives; and it would make up less than 15 percent of Social Security's shortfall. We believe that there is room for constructive negotiation, if Democrats are willing to have it; some of them are trying to blackball Bush's choice for deputy commissioner of Social Security, Andrew Biggs, because he has advocated personal accounts. But there is no case for giving away the store just to get a deal.

■ Just days after the election, Robert Rubin urged his fellow Democrats to raise taxes to shrink the deficit. We're not sure why a marginal reduction in the deficit is worth sacrificing growth for. Our looming future deficits are alarming, but they are a reason for reforming entitlements, not raising taxes. It should not be difficult for Republicans, no matter how far they have been knocked off their game, to figure out how to respond to any attempt to raise taxes, even on "the rich." If President Bush vetoed a tax increase, he would win that political battle. A Democratic attempt to raise taxes would be a political gift to a Republican party that needs one. Which is why we can't quite believe that the attempt will, in the end, be made.

■ Since the election, the press has noted the emergence of an allegedly new breed of "populist Democrats" or "Lou Dobbs Democrats." The populism consists mostly of opposition to trade. But this is an old story: The Democratic party has been moving toward protectionism for more than a decade now. It will be up to Republicans to point out that the only thing this "populism" really aims to do is to raise the price of cars and clothes for the common man.

■ The economic case against raising the minimum wage is as strong as the political case for it. Most of the research confirms what common sense suggests: When you raise the price of hiring people, employers will hire fewer people. They will have less incentive to hire people for low wages and then train them to get higher pay. A higher minimum will help some workers, it is true, but it is a scattershot way to help the poor, since some of the people helped will be the kids of well-off families. For most people, however, a higher minimum wage sounds like a free way to help the unfortunate, and voters in six states voted for higher minimums. Republicans have little leverage even to improve a federal bill on this subject, since Democrats know that they are afraid to stand against it. We hope, however, that they will do their best to insist that any bill include an option for states to set lower minimum wages. States should be free to keep their unemployment rates from rising because of ignorance and weakness in Washington.

■ In two of the Senate races—those in Montana and Missouri—Republican and Libertarian candidates together won more votes than the victorious Democrat. Libertarians seem to have helped Democrats keep a Senate seat in 1998, and to pick another one up in 2000. Surely some of those libertarian voters preferred the Democratic candidate to the Republican one, perhaps because of social issues. But some of them may think that by voting libertarian they are encouraging the Republican party to move toward their minimal-government views. This outcome is unlikely, however: Republican politicians are not going to risk alienating large portions of the electorate in order to win over half a percent of voters. If the libertarians are attempting to cast strategic votes, they are making a mistake—one for which they, and we, will all be paying higher taxes.



TERRY ASHE/AP

■ Charlie Rangel is a smoother cat than John Kerry, but he has similar opinions about the men and women in America's armed forces. "If a young fellow has an option of having a decent career, or joining the Army to fight in Iraq, you can bet your life that he would not be in Iraq," Rangel said. "If there's anyone who believes these youngsters want to fight, as the Pentagon and some generals have said, you can just forget about it." Rangel ignores the data (a Heritage Foundation report shows that the percentage of recruits from the poorest neighborhoods has declined, from 18 percent in 1999 to under 14 percent in 2005). Rangel also slanders the patriotism and commitment of those who devote their lives to defending their country. He and other Democrats want to perpetuate a Vietnam-era myth of dumb, desperate soldiers, the better to shame us into never fighting. If anyone believes Rangel puts strength and honor above cheap demagogy, you can just forget about it.

■ If you're going to public school in San Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers in your hair. The city's school board has voted to banish the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) from its high schools. As an assembly of tearful cadets looked on, opponents of the program broke into loud applause. Against JROTC, they had made two chief arguments: first, that the military unjustly discriminates against gays, thereby forfeiting its right to participate in public schooling; and second, that the program deceptively lures unsuspecting children into a career of military service. But the cheering was inspired by a much deeper

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We read of scientific research indicating that the earth's crust is billions of years old and that fossils of mankind are being unearthed from thirty thousand years ago. Consider that whoever or whatever created the earth and its people communicates with them by means of natural laws.

Richard W. Wetherill
1906-1989

During the past century, that communication revealed to the late Richard W. Wetherill the existence of a natural law not previously identified, although it relates to a ***principle*** of all natural laws: ***Conform to the action the law prescribes; failure to conform imposes penalties***.

This particular law states: ***Right behavior is logical and moral, and it succeeds; contradictory behavior is illogical or immoral, and it fails.***

When Wetherill identified the law, he called it the ***law of absolute right*** and spent decades teaching people that conformity to that law enabled them to start a new life and to recover from previous failures.

Natural laws exist in reality. The principle stated above is that conformity to the law of absolute right is mandatory and that nonconformity accounts for society's chaotic, deadly affairs.

Wetherill considered it the super-natural law, as all natural laws require strict conformity to their function or penalties are imposed. The ultimate penalty for not conforming to nature's behavioral law, sooner or later, results in death of the body, which explains why death is universally thought to be inevitable.

While people tend to dispute that concept, is there any evidence that their management of human affairs has established peace, stopped criminal activity, preserved life, or eliminated any other unwanted results?

Despite all human efforts to produce a peaceful and productive society, society remains an adversarial and afflicted entity composed of a wide spectrum of do-gooders at one end and terrorists at the other; everybody reacting to the realities of life with irrational judgments that contradict natural law.

Theorize that whoever or whatever is the creator awaits human adjustment to the ***law of absolute right***, knowing that people's well-being depends on taking *right action in every moment of every situation.*

Lacking understanding, even infants form irrational thoughts. Later, those who become heads of nations, influential savants, or persons of no status are influenced by those same infant thoughts in their adult decisions, adding irrational elements that critics hold against them.

In addition, people form personal plans made up of likes and dislikes, wants and don't wants that contradict natural law and cause seemingly endless trouble. Could that be what the creator intends? We think not—based on the communication received from natural laws, providing for everybody's total well-being.

Today those who take pride in *their* plans say this information is demeaning when, in fact, it is the most liberating ever provided humanity. But descriptive words are powerless. *The power to change behavior is found in perceiving the reality of natural laws, not in the words used to define them.*

For example, acting in accord with the reality of natural laws assures conformity to the plan of whoever or whatever is the creator. And as people reason exclusively from those laws, they become aware of a higher purpose in life. A purpose being communicated from the law of absolute right, informing them that natural laws express the creator's plan to form a peacefully vibrant, productive society!

❖ ❖ ❖

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Text written by E. Marie Bothe, president of The Alpha Publishing House and former assistant to Mr. Wetherill for many years.

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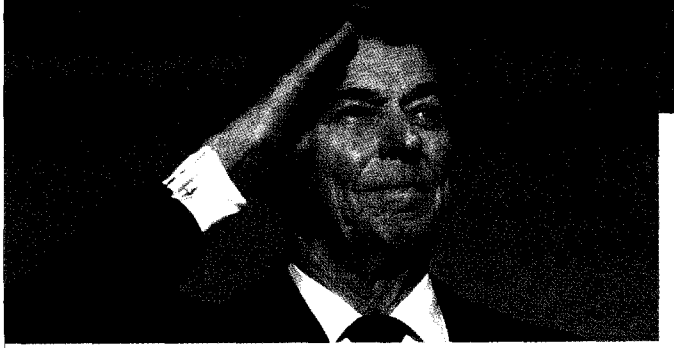
THE WEEK...

conviction. As a former teacher in the audience explained, "We need to teach a curriculum of peace." San Francisco is a city of pacifists who feel animosity toward America and are wholly ignorant of the means by which peace is secured. Their banning of JROTC is as shameful as it is unsurprising.

■ Even before Katrina's floodwaters peaked last August, the finger-wagging had begun. A smattering of environmentalists set about blaming the hurricane on capitalism, oil, and President Bush—the three horsemen of the global-warming apocalypse. We were told that Katrina's destructive power had been fed by an overheated atmosphere, and that things would only get worse as the planet got hotter. One prominent study out of Colorado State University predicted that a whopping 17 named storms would make for a turbulent 2006. But now, as the year draws to a close, we see that the hurricane season has been the most tranquil of the last decade: There have been nine named storms, only five of which were hurricanes, and none of which were more powerful than a Category 3. Of course, this doesn't really tell us anything conclusive: It is folly to suppose that a single hurricane or even a single season can tell us anything about global climatic trends. In the name of forcing us to confront an "inconvenient truth," global-warming activists sure seem to be pushing a lot of convenient fictions.

■ The technical details of the nuclear deal with India that the Senate just approved are not all that important. Mostly, we are formally acknowledging that India is developing the



AP

Check the Label

THERE are few liberal tics I hate more than the pronouncement "I don't believe in labels." Liberals seem not to like being tagged and marked for what they are because they don't like to be hemmed in. This reflex has a long intellectual pedigree, but its most recent direct antecedent is JFK's "new politics," which revolved around his claim that most of the ideological questions of the day had been settled and all that was left was for technocratic brainiacs—like him—to work out the details in some government office somewhere.

Since then, liberals have employed versions of this locution whenever they have gotten boxed in by labels. They are "post-partisan," they claim. Many liberals refuse to admit that liberalism means anything more or less than "the right thing." This is essentially the definition preferred by Jonathan Chait at *The New Republic*. Hillary Clinton is fond of saying, for example, that we need to move "beyond" labels and ideology and get down to problem-solving. Translation: Stop objecting to my ideas and help me implement them.

This sentiment is dismayingly undemocratic. In democracies labels matter because *words* matter. And words matter because democracy is about disagreement, not agreement. To say "Let's get beyond labels" is to say that disagreement itself is illegitimate.

With that said, who can deny he is suffering from label fatigue? Compassionate conservatism, crunchy conservatism, paleoconservatism, neoconservatism, progressivism, liberalism, neoliberalism, etc.: The labels proliferate like kudzu. Conservatives have started playing the same game, as if conservatism were never wrong. This is partly the inevitable consequence of the thumpin' the GOP recently received at the polls; it makes us all feel better if we can claim that our ideology wasn't the problem so much as the failure of our political leaders to implement it.

I'm sympathetic to the argument that George W. Bush betrayed conservatism. But that argument only adds to the confusion. Because he is the most powerful and famous conservative in the world at this moment, whatever President Bush does will, inevitably, come to define conservatism for millions of people.

So here's a modest proposal: Let's use names. Of course, in reality names and labels are interchangeable terms. But politics is more about perception than reality, and personalities convey a set of discernible actions better than a bunch of neos, theos, and isms. Nobody ever says, "I don't believe in names." When presidential candidates say they would appoint conservative justices to the Supreme Court, eyes usually roll. We want names! Like who? When they say Scalia and Thomas, we say ahh, gotcha. When someone says, "I'm a conservative," that doesn't give me enough information. After all, even Kevin Phillips says he's a conservative. And if someone told me he was a "Kevin Phillips conservative," I would respond, "Ah, so you mean a liberal who's afraid to admit it."

NR's Jay Nordlinger often makes this point when people ask him what kind of conservative he is. He says, succinctly, "I'm a Reaganite." The clarity here is obvious and commendable. Similarly, "Buchananite," "Clintonite," and "Rockefeller Republican" all have the benefit of conveying an approach to politics devoid of excessive abstraction. Of course, this will only spark huge arguments along the lines of: What Would Reagan Do? But that has a nice ring to it.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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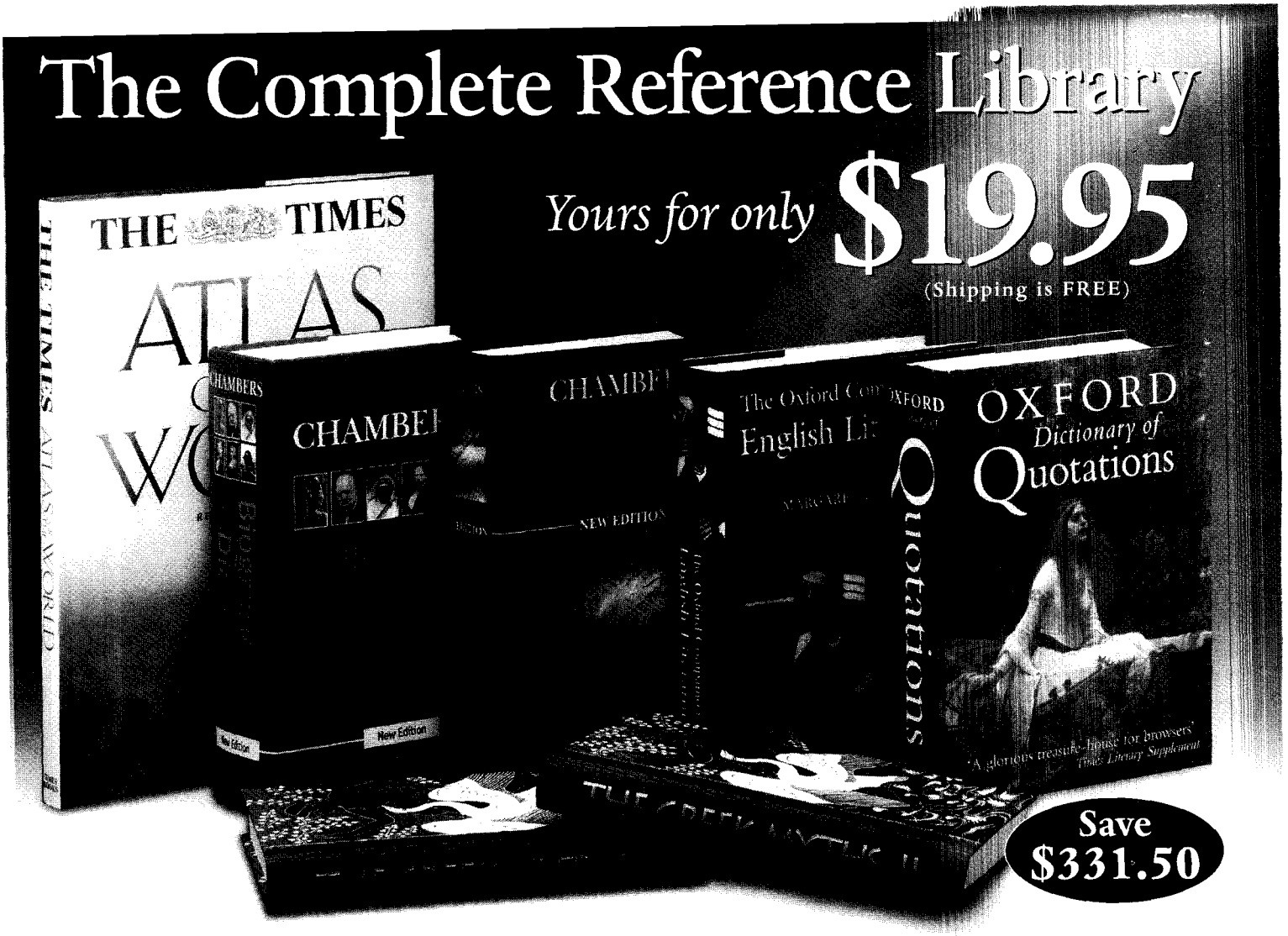

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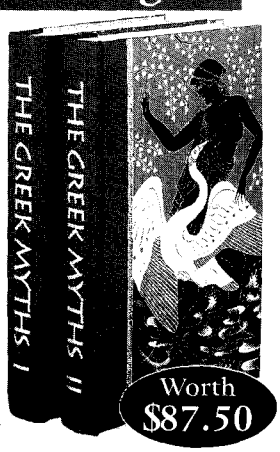

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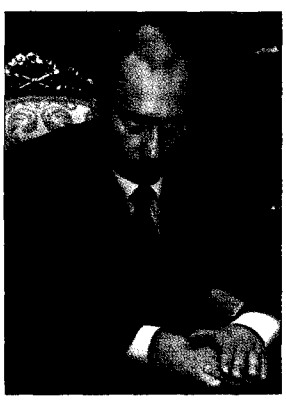
THE WEEK...

nuclear technology that India was going to develop whether or not we acknowledged it. The significance of the deal is that it moves us closer to an alliance with a rising power that shares many of our interests with respect to China and to the Middle East—a power that is also the world's largest democracy. The large margin for the deal in the House and Senate shows that even in these times, some foreign-policy issues are simple enough for both parties to understand.

■ President Bush visited Vietnam for an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, and the press covered many angles: Russia's bid to join the World Trade Organization; America's efforts to engineer consensus on North Korea; memories of the Vietnam War, won by the press and the Communists, lost by the United States and the Vietnamese people. Most important was the underlying geopolitics. Vietnam is the backdoor neighbor of its historic overlord and enemy, China. Though Vietnam is prospering now, years of Communist misrule have left it lagging behind its East Asian peers. Vietnam needs trade, and powerful non-Chinese friends; the United States needs to keep its hand in regionally, however it can. "History has a long march to it," as Bush observed in Hanoi.



DMITRY ASTAKHOV/AP

■ Alexander Litvinenko is someone to be remembered with pity and horror. A former officer in the KGB (and its contemporary remake, the FSB), he held President Vladimir Putin responsible for the darkness descending on Russia, the Chechen war, corruption, the murder of critics, and much else too. A brave man, he nonetheless moved to Britain, became British, and with other Russian exiles continued his campaign against Putin. Another dissident was the prominent journalist Anna Politkovskaya, recently gunned down in Moscow, and he was conducting his own investigation into her murder. This cost him his life too. Somehow, probably in a hotel or sushi bar, he was secretively slipped a dose of polonium-210, a radioactive material that killed him as though it were a diminutive nuclear bomb. No murder had previously been committed by this means. Very few laboratories in the world have the complex processes for producing polonium-210 in this form, and all of them are state-controlled. In a statement on his deathbed, Litvinenko directly accused Putin of responsibility for the crime. In reply, Putin made the strangely offhand remark that this was not a violent death, but was being exploited for "political provocation"—a favorite phrase of the Soviets for anything they disliked. The British establishment in fact appears extremely anxious not to point the obvious finger at Russia, to which the diplomats and police are instead appealing for help. It seems certain that Litvinenko's scientifically proficient killers will never be identified, and justice will be subordinated to (short-sighted) power politics.

■ After quoting a 14th-century Byzantine emperor's hostile opinions of Islam in his September speech in Regensburg, Pope Benedict XVI began a four-day visit to Turkey speaking of "dialogue," "brotherhood," and "reconciliation." Backing and filling? Hardly. Benedict XVI is engaged in diplomacy of the mind, reaching out to Islam on the basis of a common commitment to reason as the ally of faith. Do significant numbers of Muslims have such a commitment? If they don't, then our situation is far, far worse than the gloomiest stories from Iraq and Iran suggest. At the same time, the pope hoped to cement relations between the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodoxy, whose ecumenical patriarch, Bartholomew I, lives in Istanbul, while trying to be encouragingly apolitical about Turkey's bid for membership in the European Union (when Benedict was a cardinal, he opposed it). True diplomacy is so much more than realism; it is hope with dirt under its fingernails.

■ The butchering in an Amsterdam street of filmmaker Theo van Gogh by an Islamist stopped the famous Dutch toleration in its tracks. On the part of many Dutch people, one response has been a desire to ban the burqa, the tent-like garment that totally cloaks the identity of any Muslim woman wearing it, and functions as a symbol of the oppression of women, as well as an outward expression of determination not to integrate into Western society. Besides, children take fright at the sight. Mrs. Rita Verdonk, minister of immigration in the outgoing Dutch government, persuaded her colleagues to pass such a ban, but that was before the recent election, and perhaps an electoral ploy. Voters noted that she was responsible for driving out of politics, and indeed out of the country, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a model of Muslim integration. Mrs. Verdonk's party therefore lost seats in the election, and the fate of the burqa remains a bargaining point between parties. So things go in the land of Erasmus and Spinoza.

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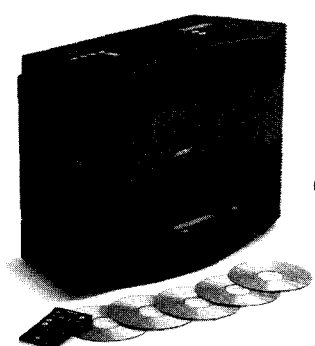

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THE WEEK...

■ Nobody doubts for a moment that Syria killed Pierre Gemayel. That's how the Assads—the hereditary dynasty ruling from Damascus—deal with anybody and everybody crossing their path. Bashar Assad hopes to recover the control over Lebanon that the Cedar Revolution wrested from him. A power-grab is timely for several reasons. A special commission of the United Nations is close to pinning on him and other family members responsibility for the murder of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri, the most prominent in the long list of those previously murdered at Syrian orders. Syria is also urging its proxy, Hezbollah, to cash in on its supposed popularity for standing up to Israel, and restore the status quo by staging a coup. Finally the midterm elections and leaks from the Iraq Study Group suggest to Damascus that one more good push will be enough to unravel the whole American position in the Middle East. The murder of Pierre Gemayel serves the purpose. He was young and personable, a government minister, a member of one of the leading Lebanese Christian families, several others of whom are on that long list of those previously murdered by Syria. If the U.S. decides to engage Syria, it must do so with both eyes wide open.

■ A Palestinian-Arab grandmother, Fatma Najar, variously reported as being 57, 64, or 68 years old, blew herself up near Israeli soldiers in the Gaza Strip the other day, after first recording the usual valedictory video. In that video, Mrs. Najar dedicated her "mission" to the Hamas-led (and, let it be remembered, democratically elected) government of Arab Palestine, and to the military leader of Hamas, Mohammed Deif. Three of the Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded. Mrs. Najar's family reported her as having nine children and nearly 40 grandchildren. She thus incarnated both of the perils Israel faces from her Arab neighbors, the jihadist and the demographic. Without wishing to make light of this ghastly incident, we cannot help reflecting that it puts into question the longstanding complaint by air travelers that swarthy young men are waved through airport security while winsome old ladies are strip-searched and have their knitting needles confiscated. We do believe that Israel, in her struggle with Arab terrorism, strives to avoid injury to innocents; but who, in an environment like the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip, can reliably be assumed to be an innocent? Not, from now on, gray-haired grannies.

■ A Saudi couple living in Aurora, Colo., were convicted of enslaving their Indonesian nanny, taking her passport, forcing her to live in the basement, and paying her less than two dollars a day. The husband, Hamaidan al-Turki, also made her a sex slave, abusing and raping her. Hamaidan's wife plea-bargained down to 60 days in jail and $90,000 in restitution, but Hamaidan got 28 years to life. "The state has criminalized these basic Muslim behaviors," he told the judge. And rightly so. Justice wobbled at the end when, at the urging of the State Department, Colorado's attorney general John Suthers flew to Riyadh to brief King Abdullah on the matter. Better to have followed the example of Sir Charles Napier, a British general in India, when local Hindus complained of a prohibition on suttee. "You say that it is your custom to burn widows. Very well. We also have a custom: When men burn a woman alive, we tie a rope around their necks and we hang them. Build your funeral pyre; beside it, my carpenters will build a gallows. You may follow your custom. And then we will follow ours."

■ Last year, out-of-wedlock births hit a historic high in the United States, accounting for 37 percent of all births. (The overall birth rate to teenagers dropped to a historic low, but four out of five of those teen mothers were unwed.) The disastrous effects of illegitimacy are well documented. A child born to an unwed mother is seven times more likely to be poor than a child raised in an intact family. Controlling for family background and neighborhood, children in single-parent homes are twice as likely to engage in criminal activity and are twice as likely to be victims of child abuse as children in two-parent homes. They are also at a higher risk of drug abuse and school failure. Teen childbearing alone costs taxpayers $9.1 billion a year. Because Hispanic women have both the highest fertility rate and the highest (and fastest-growing) unwed birthrate in the nation, they contribute disproportionately to the destructive and expensive problem of illegitimacy. That sad fact casts a different light on the president's fondness for saying that family values don't stop at the border.

■ Stories about a male contraceptive "pill" (this can be taken to include skin patches and implants) have been a recurrent feature of medical-research news for some years. Approaches have concentrated on manipulating male hormones to reduce the active sperm count to nearly zero. Messing around with hormones, however, leads to discomforts and health risks. Now a team of scientists at Kings College, London, has identified a "targeted" substance that can temporarily "switch off" the ability to ejaculate, thus bypassing the unhappy side effects of hormone-based approaches. An elaborate testing program is under way. If all goes well, the "male pill" should be available around 2012. It is not likely to revolutionize our behavior in the way the female contraceptive pill did. In this age of regrettably casual promiscuity, the male pill may have the paradoxical effect of increasing unwanted pregnancies. In the matter of their getting, or not getting, pregnant, women have a much more pressing interest than men have. If it's "up to the man," or if women come to believe that it is, or should be, then some of our more dire social problems may get worse.

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Professor Ehrman is a razor-sharp lecturer and consummate scholar with a full and ready command of his material. He is Professor of Religious Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he has taught since 1988. He has received the Students' Undergraduate Teaching Award, the Hettleman Prize for Artistic and Scholarly Achievement, and the Bowman and Gordon Gray Award for Excellence in Teaching.

His textbook on the New Testament is the most widely used in universities today. In addition to his textbook, Professor Ehrman has written dozens of book reviews and scholarly articles, and written or edited 17 books. He was recently featured in *Time* magazine for his book *Lost Christianities.*

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THE WEEK...

■ The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecology (RCOG), a prestigious British medical association, has recommended that consideration be given to allowing euthanasia for seriously ill and deformed newborn babies. The assumption that necessarily precedes an argument in favor of such a practice is obvious—namely, that certain human beings would be better off killed. It is an assumption that should be intolerable in the medical profession. Of course, doctors have already accepted it in principle. John Harris, a professor of bioethics at Manchester University, points out the logic of the RCOG's proposal: "We can terminate [pregnancy] for serious foetal abnormality up to term but cannot kill a newborn. What do people think has happened in the passage down the birth canal to make it okay to kill the foetus at one end of the birth canal but not at the other?" His reasoning is consistent—and it leads all the way to infanticide.

■ A sliver of the outrage over *If I Did It*, O. J. Simpson's unconfession to the murder of his ex-wife, Nicole Simpson, and Ron Goldman, was due to the auspices: HarperCollins, which was to publish the book, and Fox TV, which was to air an interview with him, are owned by Rupert Murdoch. Be it noted that Murdoch scrubbed the deal in part because of internal revolt: Bill O'Reilly denounced it on Fox News, and several Fox affiliates refused to air the interview. But most of the outrage—say, 99.9 percent of it—was entirely justified. A bloody slasher sought to profit from his crimes, as did his business partners. It was positively Roman in its decadence and evil, if Rome had had books and TV. Wait for the pirated versions on eBay and YouTube.

■ It began with Ethnic Studies, which, even if you don't approve of them, at least contain some fragments of actual history and sociology. Then our universities opened themselves to Women's Studies, closely followed by Queer Studies, then Disability Studies. If you think that has exhausted the possibilities for giving claims of victimhood their own college departments, professors, and budgets, you have underestimated the ingenuity and ambition of the grievance industry. Get ready for Fat Studies. Yes: Fat activism, which goes back at least to the 1960s, has at last attained academic standing. The University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee is offering a course titled "The Social Construction of Obesity." There is no such thing as being fat, you see; "fatness" is just a figment. Nor is there any substance to claims by "scientists" that "obesity" is "linked" to diabetes, hypertension, or heart disease. Those are just ploys by the oppressive power structure to perpetuate discrimination against . . . Well, you get the idea. "Fat scholars" (*sic*—we are quoting here from the *New York Times*) "hope that one day fat studies will be as ubiquitous on campus as Shakespeare." It is at any rate a relief to know that the Bard—who had his own, mostly fond, opinions of fat people—has not yet been crowded out of the college curriculum by these faddy, bogus new "studies."

WILFREDO LEE/AP

AT WAR

Security First

OUR position in Iraq has continued to deteriorate. The civil war has worsened. The Sunni insurgency in Anbar is as strong as ever. Prime minister Nouri al-Maliki demonstrates almost daily his dependence on the anti-American thug Moqtada al-Sadr. His government continues to be corrupt and ineffectual. Meanwhile, here at home support for the war steadily sags, and, contrary to the conventional wisdom, it is conceivable that Democrats will agitate to cut off funding for the war should we continue on our downward slide in Iraq.

At this moment of crisis, Washington has turned to a bout of wishful thinking dressed up by a bipartisan commission and the presence of Bush-family fixer James A. Baker III. The Jim Baker–Lee Hamilton Iraq Study Group is reportedly going to recommend that the Bush administration talk to Syria and Iran as a way to ease our trouble in Iraq. This idea is less realpolitik than childishness. Syria and Iran have no incentive to help us in Iraq, where they are fomenting the violence. So long as we are losing there, we have zero leverage. The only possible reason they could have to cooperate, or pretend to cooperate, with us would be to get us to surrender our strategic position in the region entirely by implicitly blessing a Syrian reoccupation of Lebanon, or Iranian possession of a nuclear weapon.

Again and again in Iraq, our troops have cleared areas of insurgents, only to have them return when the troops vacate the areas or hand them over to incompetent Iraqi security forces.

But such is the political and media momentum behind the Baker-Hamilton commission, and the weakened state of a President Bush fresh from his electoral "thumping," that Bush would be hard-pressed to ignore the commission's recommendations. He may at least have to engage in some sort of window-dressing dialogue with Syria and Iran—knowing it will go nowhere—at the same time he plays up, for his purposes, the commission's likely recommendation that we not cut and run from Iraq. This will provide Bush what might be his last chance to create progress on the ground in Iraq before domestic political support for the war crumbles entirely.

The linchpin in Iraq continues to be Baghdad. Our latest attempt to secure the city predictably failed for want of U.S. troops. Again and again in Iraq, our troops have cleared areas of insurgents, only to have them return when the troops vacate the areas or hand them over to incompetent Iraqi security forces. This is what just happened in Baghdad. Bush must send a substantial number of additional troops to

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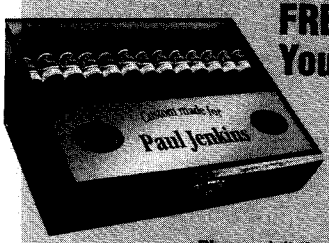

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THE WEEK...

Baghdad in a bid to restore a semblance of order to the city.

It is said that we don't have the troops to send. No less a personage than General Abizaid has said any surge could only be temporary. There is no doubt that extending rotations and sending troops back into Iraq for the third time would be a severe strain on the military. Nor can there be any doubt that trying to fight two post-9/11 wars with a pre-9/11-sized military was a historic mistake, for which President Bush will be judged harshly. But if there is any cause that calls for straining the military, it is an attempt to keep from losing a war. A loss in Iraq would lead to a drastic worsening of our position in a strategically crucial part of the world, undermine our prestige worldwide, and perhaps lead to the creation of terrorist safe havens.

It may turn out that more troops won't make a difference, that Iraq is on an inexorable slide toward chaos. But, so far, U.S. troops have made a difference wherever they have been deployed within Iraq. It is often said that there isn't a military solution in Iraq, only a political one. This is partly correct. Long-term stability will require some sort of deal and reconciliation between the Shiites and the Sunnis. The government will have to purge itself of its criminal and radical elements. And Shiite militias will have to disarm.

But the security situation and Iraqi politics have a dynamic relationship, one influencing the other. As the violence has worsened, the politics of the country have worsened too, with Sadr gaining influence at the expense of Grand Ayatollah Sistani. If we can stabilize Baghdad by thwarting the Sunni insurgency, Maliki might get some breathing space and the Shiite radicals might find their support weakening. That would create the conditions for disarming the militias, which only get stronger as Sunni insurgents continue their sickening campaign of mayhem.

We have had to engage in a constant process of downgrading our expectations in Iraq. Now a representative government that is stable enough to survive and is not an arm of Iran looks like an outcome fervently to be hoped for. Bush has to act decisively while he still can, lest he be forced into merely managing our defeat.

IMMIGRATION

Legends of the Fall

IMMIGRATION restrictionists did badly in the election, but only because they were disproportionately Republicans in a bad year for the breed. The notion that they lost because they were restrictionists is spin from the open-borders crowd.

Now it is true that a monomaniacal obsession with immigration seems to have hurt congressman J. D. Hayworth and congressional candidate Randy Graf in Arizona. But opposition to amnesty helped other Republicans, such as Chris Shays of Connecticut and Pete King of New York, withstand the Democratic tide. Several victorious Democratic candidates—such as Virginia Senate candidate Jim Webb, whose win flipped the Senate to the Democrats—favored enforcement first. Meanwhile some Republican supporters of amnesty, such as Sens. Mike DeWine and Lincoln Chafee, lost their reelection bids.

Even in Arizona, Sen. Jon Kyl, who voted against the open-borders bill, beat a Democratic candidate who supported it. Arizona voters also approved, by wide margins, three ballot measures cracking down on illegal immigration, plus one declaring English the state's official language.

A final piece of mythology concerns the Hispanic vote. Exit polling found that 30 percent of Hispanics voted for Republican House candidates, down from 38 percent in the 2002 midterms. To see the significance of this drop, it has to be put in context. The percentage of white voters who picked Republicans fell from 58 to 51 percent over the same period. Hispanics just followed the national trend.

The White House appears to be drawing all the wrong lessons about immigration from the election.

The White House appears to be drawing all the wrong lessons about immigration from the election. Its choice of Sen. Mel Martinez as general chairman of the Republican National Committee seems to be, in part, the result of his having been the lead sponsor of the amnesty bill that the Senate approved earlier this year, without the votes of most Republicans. An analysis of the bill by the restrictionist Center for Immigration Studies, extrapolating from the experience of the 1986 amnesty, conservatively estimated that more than 14 million people would gain legal status and move toward citizenship because of the measure's various amnesty provisions—and this estimate didn't take into account the bill's huge increases in future legal immigration. In addition, there is renewed uncertainty about whether the administration will push to build a fence at the border, even though the president signed a bill to authorize its building.

So the White House's answer to the election losses appears to be to pass a bill that most Republicans dislike, in the service of a policy that will import more Democratic voters to the country. Get ready for a long spell in the minority.

OBITUARY

Milton Friedman, R.I.P.

WE live in a world transformed by Milton Friedman. Our pay stubs reflect one of the achievements about which he was properly ambivalent: He was one of the economists who, during World War II, introduced tax withholding to finance the military effort. That young people are free to choose a job at all is in part a tribute to his long opposition to conscription. He helped us to understand our own history. His *Monetary History of the United States*, written with Anna Schwartz, overthrew the dominant Keynesian explanation of the Great Depression as a result of "underconsumption" and placed the Federal Reserve's misconduct at the center of the story.

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He helped us to understand the economic calamities of the 1970s. It is now generally accepted that inflation is a monetary phenomenon, and not the fault of unions or tax cuts; it was not generally accepted back then. (Friedman was by no means doctrinaire in his monetarism: He fully understood that changes in financial markets had made it tricky to define the money supply whose growth needed to be controlled, and was open to varying proposals about how to deal with the difficulty.) Friedman largely discredited the idea that the government could "fine tune" the economy by, for example, passing out temporary tax cuts during recessions: He pointed out that people did not alter their spending habits based on temporary income gains so much as they did based on permanent ones. And both Friedman and bitter experience taught policymakers that it was folly to try to buy temporarily lower unemployment by tolerating a little bit more inflation.

We think of documentaries as a left-wing genre; but Milton and Rose Friedman's series *Free to Choose* was perhaps the most influential example of educational television for adults. In 1962, he proposed school vouchers and a market-based reform of Social Security. He lived to age 94, but we still haven't caught up to him. R.I.P.

notes & asides

■ Milton Friedman, R.I.P.

It isn't right to rail against fortune when death comes to a friend, or a hero—in this case, both—at the high age of 94. Still, we are free to choose, and there was grief when word came to us of the death of Milton Friedman. We were on board a large ship, where a week of seminars at sea was being guided by a dozen celebrants of conservative doctrine. One was to have been Friedman himself, but when the boat pulled away from San Diego, bound for Mexico, Friedman was in a hospital in San Francisco.

What struck the band of brothers who came together last Friday afternoon to devise an impromptu tribute to our missing seminarist was in fact exactly that—grief, never mind that he had lived 94 years. Although Professor Friedman engaged himself to the end, in tandem with his brilliant wife, Rose, in academic and philosophical work, it was not the discontinuation of this that caused the pang aboard the S.S. *Oosterdam*. If the word had come that Friedman would never again write an academic paper, or a book or column, we'd have tightened our belts, and perhaps reminded ourselves of the million words that are there in print, and will always be there, to reread and to ponder. But what we felt was not so much the discontinuation of that great wellspring of liberal and penetrating thought. It was grief for the loss of a person.

It is inevitably so that the end of life of a central intellectual or political or indeed theatrical figure can be felt personally only by a comparative few, because only a few can have known any historical figure. The legion of admirers at a remove—those who felt for him, without ever having met him, admiration, devotion, even love—is something different, more detached. But there was also the impact of his person on individual students and friends and coadjutors, and on Thursday, November 16, we felt a wholly personal loss.

The next day we put together an afternoon seminar at the hands of confederates on board. John O'Sullivan spoke of the international impact Friedman had had during five decades, from the Sixties until the end. Robert Conquest, the scholar of Russia, poet, and, along with Friedman, fellow at the Hoover Institution, remarked the cultural impact of the great economist. Rich Lowry and Ramesh Ponnuru spoke of his influence on undergraduates. Arnold Beichman, also a fellow at the Hoover Institution, an author and public intellectual—and nonagenarian—had known the deceased as long as anyone present, and did not attempt to hide his tears. Jay Nordlinger presided, weaving together, for the benefit of the 400 guests, the highlights of the life so mourned.

Après ski: Chickering, Friedman, and WFB

This author and friend had been struck down by an overnight illness. Had I spoken, I'd have stressed Milton's capacity for friendship and fine company. We met, along with another friend, every year for 19 years for a long weekend of skiing and conviviality, interrupted, finally, by illness. "When I undertook the operation," he wrote me in 1994, "I did it very much in the hope that it would enable me to go skiing in January, but I am afraid the recovery isn't going to be fast enough for me to do so. I have already told Lawry [Chickering] about it. I cannot tell you how much I regret having to do this. With all my love, Milton." A year later: "I do not believe in miracles, and that is what I believe it would take to enable me to be on skis in six months' time." A year later: "Those many years we spent three days together at Alta are among my happiest memories." And after I published a piece about our skiing life, "You captured beautifully our joint satisfaction with our sessions at Alta. The fluency and sensitivity of your writing always astound me. Your generosity of spirit is remarkable and I am most grateful for having been a major beneficiary."

That is how true friends can address each other, and it was the impact of an end to the expression of such sentiments that struck me so hard on learning of the death of this Nobel Prize winner, the dominant economic and libertarian voice of the 20th century, my sometime skiing buddy.

—WFB

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The mushy past: Tip O'Neill and Bob Michel, 1985

■ POLITICS ■

Beware of Bi

What do Democrats mean when they talk up 'bipartisanship'?

KATE O'BEIRNE

FOLLOWING the Democrats' failure in 2004 to defeat the president she called "incompetent" and "dangerous," minority leader Nancy Pelosi sought advice on how to end the GOP leadership's "freak show." She reportedly asked a group of marketers, "If you are number two and want to be number one, what do you do?" As recounted in the *New York Times*, "their suggestion . . . was to 'take down' the president; it was not enough to simply kick him in the shins." The loving grandmother explained that she looked forward to restoring civility and open debate once Democrats were back in control, "but first you have to drain the swamp."

So soon-to-be Speaker Pelosi resolved to attack and obstruct. She was rewarded by voters this November, and is now dispensing advice of her own: Republicans should be bipartisan by supporting the new majority's agenda. What she has in mind is the "bipartisanship" of the good old days, when nice Bob Michel—the longtime GOP House minority leader—led an impotent caucus that got along by going along.

Although Washington lore faults congressional Republicans for ushering in an era of poisonous partisanship, Pelosi's plan to recapture the House meant a ban on any bipartisanship. She enforced a party loyalty that had House Democrats deliver "the most unified voting record in 50 years," according to the *Washington Post*. In 2005, her caucus voted along strict party lines 88 percent of the time. In 1997, 51 House Democrats supported a Republican budget that significantly reduced domestic spending. Last year, there wasn't a single Democratic vote for a five-year GOP budget plan with far more modest reductions.

Veterans of Bob Michel's caucus marvel at the nostalgia for an allegedly peaceful past, when comity and cooperation reigned on Capitol Hill. "It's like someone longing for the Deep South of the 1950s, when everyone supposedly got along just fine," says one seasoned GOP aide. "*They* were perfectly happy, because they could do anything they wanted and we couldn't do anything about it," the aide explains. Republicans repeatedly complained about the majority's abuses that permitted committee chairmen to block popular reforms, prevented GOP amendments to bills, and stifled debate on the floor. Michel called the Democrats' modus operandi "legislating by censorship."

Republicans complained repeatedly, but saw little chance of changing the correlation of forces until Newt Gingrich came along. Gingrich had a vision that Michel couldn't imagine. When Michel announced his retirement in October 1993—after 38 conciliatory years in Congress—he said, "In the House, while we're still in the minority where I've always been, we're pulling together and making the most of our numbers. And even though I believe the prospects are excellent for our winning big in the House next year, I'm not sure it will be enough to make me the Speaker." The combative Gingrich succeeded him as minority leader—and promptly became Speaker.

The celebrated "bipartisanship" of the GOP's wilderness years was typically due to a few rogue Republicans who voted with the Democratic majority. For example, the late congressman Hamilton Fish was the principal Republican sponsor of the 1991 "bipartisan" Civil Rights Act. Fish declined to run for reelection in 1994 because of poor health, and spent his entire 25-year congressional career serving happily in the minority. He once explained that he "was better suited to the less confrontational, more pragmatic political style of a minority leader. I'm not a confrontational person, so I don't know if I

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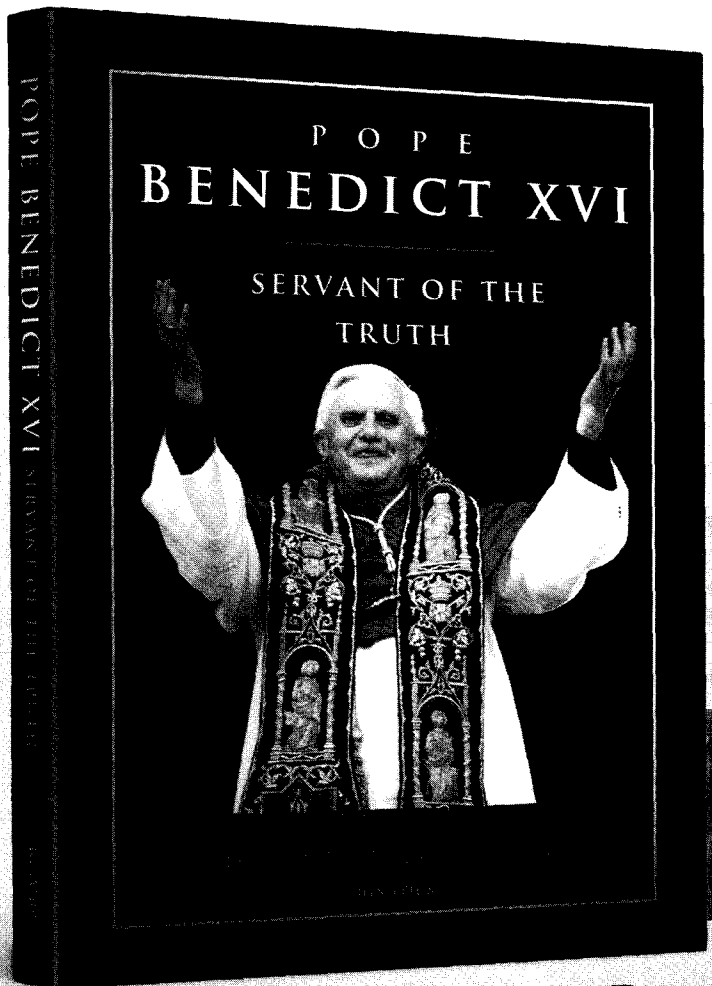

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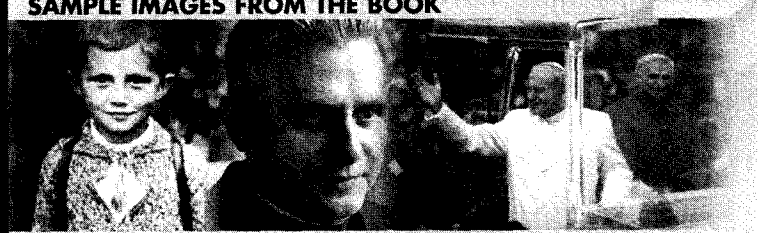

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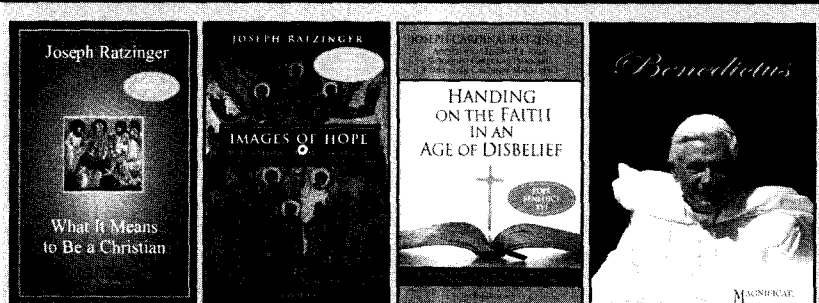

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would have been a more successful person as a member of the majority. I doubt it."

After twelve years in the majority, no Republican is happy to have returned to minority status, but some do see an opportunity to be bipartisan deal brokers and give Democrats the kind of cover formerly provided by GOP liberals like Representative Fish. Earlier this year, Rep. Chris Shays said, "If I'm in the minority, I'll be one of the most powerful members of Congress."

When rogue Republicans defect from their caucus, they provide the kind of "bipartisanship" celebrated by the media. The Senate's "comprehensive" immigration bill was "bipartisan" owing to a handful of Republicans who rejected any attempt to compromise with conservatives. Mike Franc of the Heritage Foundation points out that 42 Senate Democrats and ten Senate Republicans defeated every conservative amendment to immigration-reform legislation, ranging from a requirement that the border be secured before amnesty provisions and a guest-worker program are instituted to a requirement that guest workers return home when their visas expire.

In contrast, when 64 House Democrats supported the Secure Fence Act earlier this year, the vote was portrayed as the handiwork of a stubborn Republican House at odds with respectable opinion on immigration. Now the incoming chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, Rep. Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, is reportedly interested in abandoning the construction of the 700-mile fence along the border with Mexico. Although the fence was supported by a 283–138 bipartisan House majority, it's a safe bet that Thompson won't be accused of a partisan assault if he kills it.

The Republicans who began drawing up lists of vulnerable newly elected Democrats within hours of seeing Election Day vote tallies are in little danger of heeding the siren song of bipartisanship, but many worry about President Bush's willingness to endorse Democratic proposals that a majority of Republicans oppose. "The concern is that he will put the 'bi' in bipartisanship," says a former leadership aide.

When Nancy Pelosi visited the "emperor with no clothes" following the elections, the New York *Daily News* reported that, according to a source familiar with the luncheon discussion, "he acknowledged that on many issues Democrats are more in line with the American people, and said he would like to bring the GOP more in line." In addition to Iraq, President Bush and the Democratic leaders talked about energy policy and the prospects of moving an immigration bill that includes the president's guest-worker program. Bush declared, "I believe on a lot of issues we can find common ground." And, "I understand when campaigns end, and I know when governing begins."

While the president may want to burnish his legacy on domestic issues by finding common ground with Democrats, for congressional Republicans the 2008 campaign is already underway. They have two years to rebuild their brand name. A pre-election survey of voters in twelve toss-up Republican districts, conducted by GOP pollsters, concluded, "If the war in Iraq was brought to a successful and triumphal conclusion tomorrow, the Republican brand would still be in trouble." OnMessage, Inc., found that voters in these GOP districts trusted Democrats more on fiscal issues. Democrats were credited with being more likely than Republicans to cut taxes for the middle class (42–29), to reduce the deficit (47–22), and to keep government spending under control (38–21, although here "neither" came in second at 31 percent).

Nancy Pelosi did not become Speaker of the House by cooperating with Republicans while they were in the majority.

The voters surveyed weren't calling for a bipartisan pact to hike taxes and boost spending. And Nancy Pelosi did not become Speaker of the House by cooperating with Republicans while they were in the majority. As she now asks Republicans to show their bipartisanship by voting for her liberal agenda, she is saying, "Do as I say, not as I do." That is counsel unworthy of any loving grandmother. **NR**

■ **POLITICS II**

Blue Dogs Bark

The role of moderate Dems in a Pelosi House

BYRON YORK

Rep. John Tanner, chairman of the self-styled "Blue Dog Democrats," has a colorful way of describing the influence he hopes his group of moderate lawmakers will have in Speaker Nancy Pelosi's House. "They'll have to talk to us on the tarmac rather than asking us to jump 30,000 feet to catch the plane after it's left," says Tanner in his Tennessee drawl. "If they want our help, I don't think that's too much to ask."

What he means is that the new Democratic leaders, dominated by true-blue liberals like Pelosi, won't really control the House: To get anything done, they'll need to consult with more moderate Democrats like Tanner and the Blue Dogs. It's a matter of simple numbers. Come January, there will be 232 Democrats in the House, and 44 of them will be Blue Dogs (maybe more, since a few other Democrats are said to be hoping to join). Take the Blue Dogs away, and Democrats are well short of the 218 votes needed for a majority.

That simple fact has meant that the Blue Dogs are receiving lots of attention these days, more than at any time since their founding, back in 1995. After the Democrats' cataclysmic defeat in 1994, a group of moderates—the founders included then-representatives Charlie Stenholm of Texas and Billy Tauzin of Louisiana—got together to separate themselves from the old-style, tax-and-spend, interest-group liberals who had led the party to defeat. They called themselves Blue Dogs because—well, there's some disagreement about that. Their website explains, "Taken from the South's longtime description of a party loyalist as one who would vote for a yellow dog if

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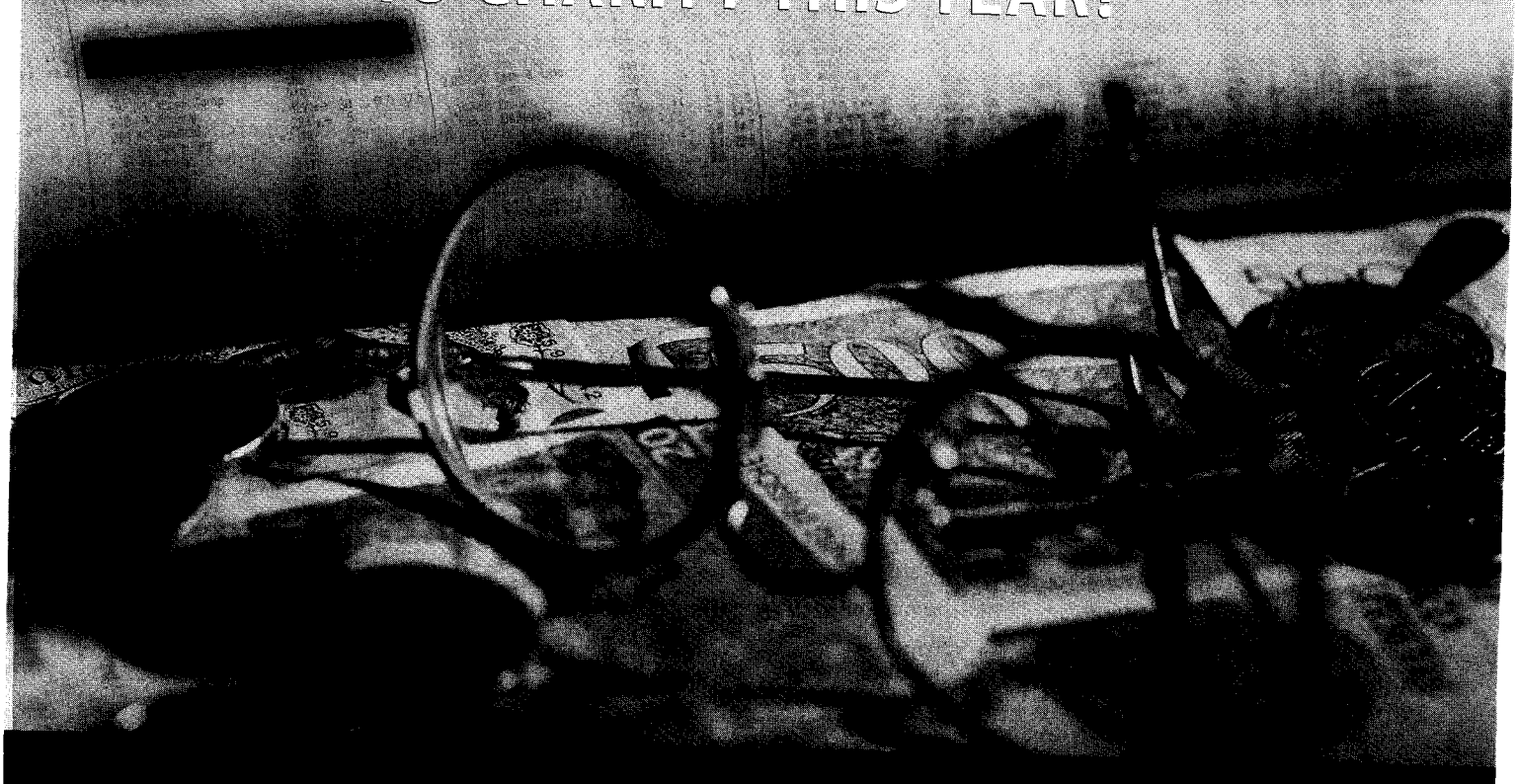

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it were on the ballot as a Democrat, the 'Blue Dog' moniker was taken by members of the coalition because their moderate-to-conservative views had been 'choked blue' by their party in the years leading up to the 1994 election." A more pedestrian explanation is that, early on, the group occasionally met in Tauzin's office, which featured an eye-catching painting by Louisiana artist George Rodrigue, whose trademark is a quizzical-looking blue dog. One way or another, a name was born.

Now, the Blue Dogs—veteran members like Tanner and fellow Tennessean Jim Cooper, as well as newcomers like former Redskins quarterback Heath Shuler and Brad Ellsworth—are trying to distance themselves from the old-style, tax-and-spend, interest-group liberals who have led their party to victory. And also, by the way, from the big-spending Republicans who led their party to defeat. Although they are generally a little more socially conservative than other Democrats, and a little more cautious about pulling out of Iraq, to hear the Blue Dogs tell it, their big issue, from now through 2008, will be fiscal responsibility.

"Where the Republicans made their fatal mistake was allowing the pay-go rules to lapse," says Tanner. "They are not an end in themselves, but they do force choices. Once you let them go, it becomes 'I scratch your back and you scratch mine.'" Tanner is referring to the doctrine that any new tax cuts or spending must be offset by similar cuts in spending. It's a doctrine Republicans in the House used to believe in—and to which many hope to return. Tanner says he'll stress the issue of financial accountability in the executive branch, too. A number of federal agencies have, to put it kindly, fallen down on that job, and Tanner says he'll push for more auditing. "If you can't tell us what happened to the money we took away from taxpayers involuntarily, then you don't get it next year," he says.

It sounds good, but Republicans are cautious. We've heard a lot of nice rhetoric coming from the Blue Dogs in recent years, Republicans say, but they sometimes haven't backed up their words with votes. For example, the Blue Dogs didn't stand up for the Deficit Reduction Act—which would seem to be their perfect issue—opting instead to side with their party against the GOP. Now, if there is a tight vote, asks a key Republican aide, "Are they going to be more true to what they say their Blue Dog principles are, or are they going to be more true to the leadership?"

The answer to that question will lie in how the Blue Dogs react to being in the majority. The group was born in the minority and has played minority politics during its entire existence. Blue Dogs could cast a protest vote here and there—claiming, for example, that the deficit-reduction measure didn't go far enough—and proclaim their independence, knowing that, with Republicans in control, their vote would not make the difference between Democratic victory and defeat. Now their votes will matter—a lot.

In the end, wary Republicans believe Speaker Pelosi might be their best ally, forcing moderates to inch away from her sometimes reflexively liberal positions. Certainly the Blue Dogs weren't encouraged by Pelosi's decision to support the anti-war John Murtha, a favorite of the left wing, over frontrunner Steny Hoyer in the race for House majority leader.

ROMAN GENN

Heath Shuler, incoming Blue Dog

"I was puzzled by it," Tanner says. "I hope she'll be Speaker of the House, and not the Democratic leader."

Indeed, after the vote—in which 149 Democrats stuck with Hoyer, against the 86 who voted with Pelosi—Republicans saw an opening. "One hundred forty-nine Democrats demonstrated that they are willing to buck Nancy Pelosi," Republican whip Roy Blunt said after the leadership election. "We'll work each day to give those Democrats a viable alternative to her liberal, San Francisco agenda."

It's a prospect that has to worry Pelosi, who has spent weeks pooh-poohing the notion that she will impose a San Francisco agenda on anyone, especially moderate Democrats. But the message isn't getting through. A few days after the election, *Saturday Night Live*—not exactly an arm of the Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy—began with an actress portraying Pelosi addressing the nation. Republicans had tried to scare people about her "San Francisco values," Pelosi said, but that simply wasn't true. Her values are basic American values, she explained, such as the belief that health care should be for all, and that there should be freedom of religion—"whether you're a Wiccan priestess, a Druid, tantric Buddhist, Servant of Moloch, Lord of Fire, Presbyterian, or a member of the Cult of Kali." A moment later, an actor portraying a Pelosi staffer dressed in full gay leather S&M gear walked up to her desk. "Dana, about your outfit," Pelosi said to him. "It's alright now, but as of January, you might have to go with more of a business look for the office." "Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't know," the staffer says.

"No, no—it's fine for now, but, you know, after the transition," Pelosi tells him.

That one skit summed up everything the Blue Dog Democrats don't want to be. In the days since the election, they've done a good job putting some space between themselves and their new Speaker. But so far, it's been all talk. Starting in January, we'll find out if they really mean it. **NR**

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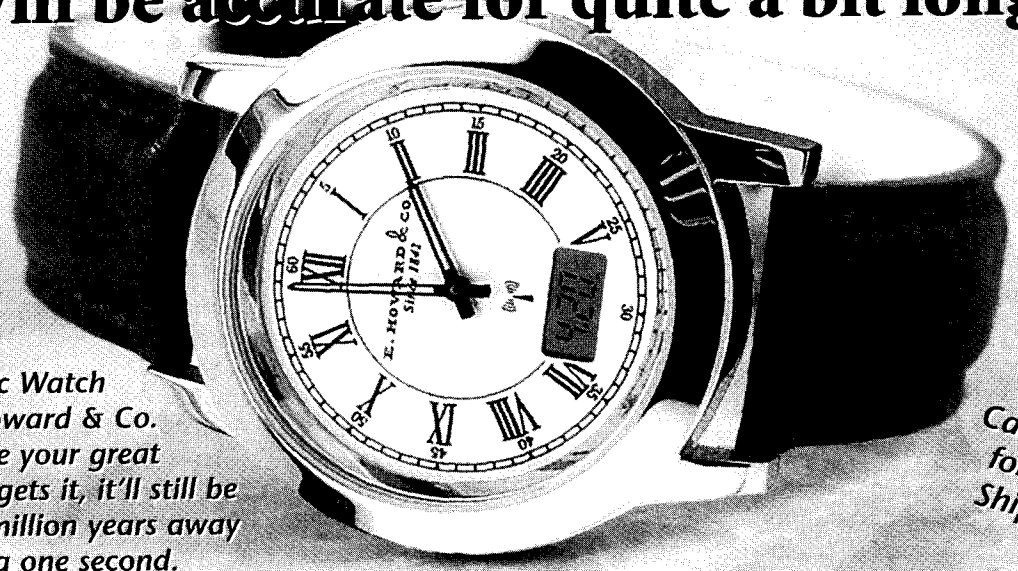

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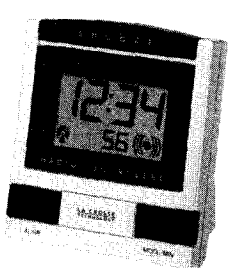

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■ POLITICS III

Damn Yankees

The GOP and its Northeast problem

JONATHAN MARTIN

THOMAS F. SCHALLER, a Democrat who teaches political science at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, has written a book urging his party to stop trying to win back the South and instead focus on making gains in the Midwest and West. In *Whistling Past Dixie*, Schaller argues that the twin impact of race and religion on the South's politics puts it out of reach for Democrats, who would be better off investing in parts of the country that are truly swing areas.

Conservatives and Republicans might consider the mirror image of Schaller's "Dump Dixie" thesis. Should the GOP cut and run from liberal New England? Put another way, would it be better off directing the millions it drops trying to keep such mavericks as Chris Shays or the just-defeated Lincoln Chafee in office toward more loyal Republicans in the battlegrounds Schaller cites?

It is tempting, and there are signs that the Northeast is on its way to being lost forever to the GOP. As irritating as the apostasy of a Shays or a Chafee may be, however, the GOP risks much in writing off the region. With control of Congress so closely divided and yet another tight presidential race looming, Republicans can't afford to give up anywhere.

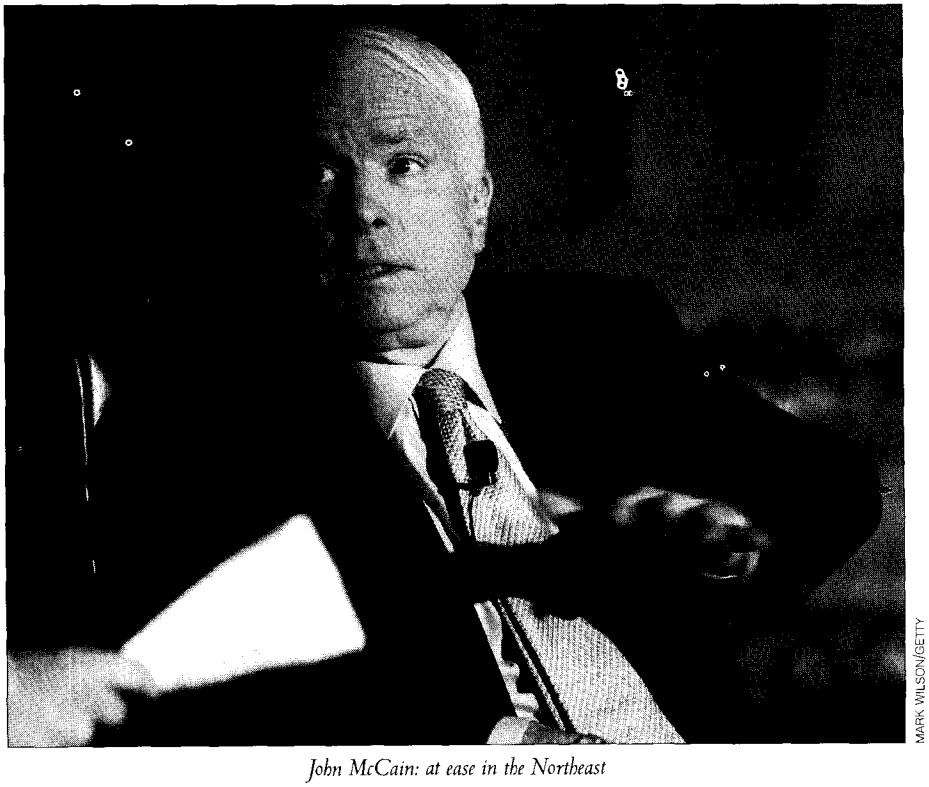
The landscape for New England Republicans is now as bleak as the region's weather in mid-January. The 2006 midterm elections saw the defeat of two of Connecticut's three GOP congressmen, Rhode Island's only Republican in Washington, and both of New Hampshire's GOP House members. At the level of state government, Republicans also lost ground. It's true that three of the region's six states retained their Republican governors; but the governorship of Massachusetts is now held by a Democrat for the first time in 16 years, both chambers of the New Hampshire legislature flipped from Republican to Democratic control, and Connecticut's capitol now hosts veto-proof Democratic majorities, greatly weakening reelected GOP governor Jodi Rell.

As recently as the presidential election of 1988, a Massachusetts-born, Connecticut-bred, part-time Maine resident atop the GOP ticket won four of the region's six states. But George W. Bush lost all six New England states in 2004, after winning only New Hampshire in 2000. Things are almost as bad in Congress. After this year's election, the GOP has just one New Englander in the House (Shays of Connecticut), and only four of the region's twelve senators are Republican. Of New England's 34-member congressional delegation, then, only five are Republicans. And two of the four GOP senators could be on the chopping block in 2008: Susan Collins of Maine and John Sununu of New Hampshire will both be up for reelection, and both will face serious, well-funded Democratic challengers.

With finite resources, GOP leaders will have to consider which is the wiser use of their money: propping up the unreliable Collins, or investing early to retain conservative senators in places like New Mexico, Colorado, and Minnesota—states in competitive regions where congressional majorities and the keys to the White House could be won or lost. (The importance of these states is demonstrated by the Republicans' choice of Minneapolis–St. Paul to host their 2008 convention, and the Democrats' likely pick of Denver.)

Schaller himself acknowledges the implications of his argument for the GOP. "Republican losses in the Northeast—the region Democrats failed to consolidate control over until 2006—now make the Midwest and Interior West the central battlegrounds for both parties," he says. The GOP needs to "de-prioritize the Northeast in the same manner Democrats have de-prioritized the South, namely, so that they can focus on the states and regions which have the potential to tip the balance of power."

But Charlie Cook, editor of the nonpartisan *Cook Political Report*, argues that Republicans shouldn't give up on their northeastern moderate-liberals, just as Democrats shouldn't give up on their



MARK WILSON/GETTY

John McCain: at ease in the Northeast

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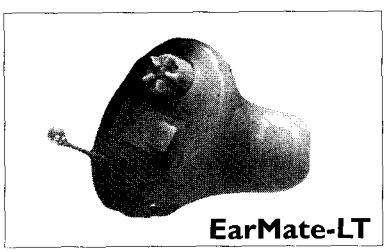
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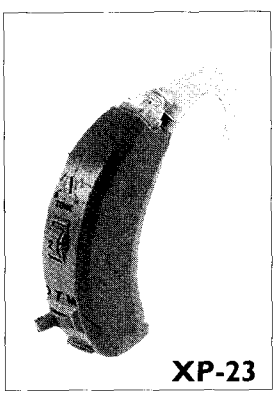
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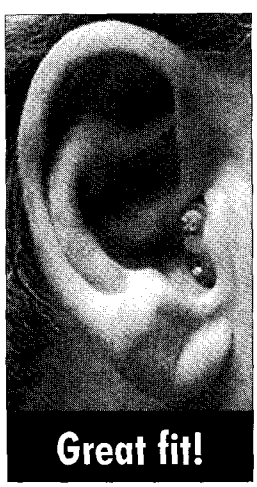

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few southern moderate-conservatives. "Do you spend an inordinate amount of resources to pick up seats in a hostile territory?" he asks. "No, but you try to hang on to what you got."

And while Republicans have got only one New Englander left in the House, the fate of Shays could prove critical in a closely fought 2008 battle, when the GOP must pick up about 15 seats to regain the majority (a few of this year's closest House races are still to be decided). A similar argument can be made about the Senate, where limiting aid to a Sununu or a Collins might mean forgoing any hope of returning the Democrats to the minority. What's more, it's tactically easier to keep an incumbent in office than it is to retain control of an open seat. The GOP should keep this in mind as it faces the likely retirement of veteran senators in New Mexico and Colorado.

Republicans should not dismiss New England on the presidential level, either. So says no less a conservative than David Keating, executive director of the Club for Growth, an organization that spent hundreds of thousands in an unsuccessful primary campaign against Chafee earlier this year. "You can't cede any vote," says Keating. "New Hampshire only has four electoral votes"; but the last two White House contests each hinged on a single state, and "four votes is four votes."

Further, the GOP nominee in 2008—whether Arizona senator John McCain, Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, or former New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani—will depart from the Bush model in both style and substance. Gone will be the swagger and religiosity of West Texas that so many Yankees have despised. In its place will be, more than likely, a candidate more palatable north of the Mason-Dixon line. Two of the likely nominees call the North home, and the third, though from the Sunbelt, is very much at ease in the Northeast (just ask President Bush how popular McCain is in New Hampshire).

"If you have someone who's perceived as anti-Washington, is an ethical and moral leader, a good steward of the taxpayer, and cares about the people's business, they have as good a chance in New England as they do in the South," argues Ron Kaufman, RNC committeeman from Massachusetts and political director in Bush 41's White House. Though a Romney adviser, Kaufman says that either his candidate or McCain could, with "the right campaign and right message," play well in New England, winning three or four states there in the general election.

Therein, of course, lies the difficulty. To New Englanders like Kaufman, the Republican brand is defined, above all, by the ethos of "good government." Frugal, moral, compassionate, and competent, Kaufman's GOP is tolerant of dissent on specific issues so long as these overarching themes are honored. But many in the region now have a much different perception of Republicans, observes Dante Scala, a professor at Saint Anselm College in New Hampshire and the author of *Stormy Weather*, a book on his state's primary. "They look at the party nowadays and say it's too southern, too conservative, too religious."

Moreover, Scala finds a divide within the camp of disaffected Yankee Republicans. There are those who belong to what he calls the party's liberal Rockefeller wing, as embodied most recently by Chafee. They probably won't ever come back to the GOP, but their numbers are small enough that they won't be missed. Then there are those who belong to what Scala calls the Goldwater wing. These are traditional Republican voters who have been turned off not just by the party's cultural conservatism, but also by its mismanagement of crises from Baghdad to New Orleans, and have abandoned the GOP even though it is more in sync with their small-government convictions. With the right message, the right messenger, and a bit of Democratic overreaching to remind them why they used to pull the Republican lever, these lapsed libertarians can be brought back into the fold.

That's the hopeful scenario for the GOP, at least. But Scala notes that the Goldwater wing believes in an "ideology that spans the gap" between New England Republicans and those elsewhere. If that's so, there is also a much more worrisome possibility: "Perhaps New England is the canary in the coal mine—and the Southwest is next to go." **NR**

■ **POLITICS IV**

Exit of a Champion

Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich is defeated in Maryland

JAY NORDLINGER

REPUBLICANS and conservatives suffered a lot of losses last month, on Election Day. And one of the toughest to take was that of Robert L. Ehrlich, the governor of Maryland. He is a true-blue Reagan conservative, and he governed one of the most liberal and Democratic states in the Union. In 2002, he pulled off a surprise, beating Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, 51 percent to 48. This year, however, he lost to Martin O'Malley, the mayor of Baltimore. The vote was 53 percent to 46.

Thus has one of the brightest stars in the Republican party been sidelined, maybe permanently.

He is an unusual fellow, Ehrlich. Went to Princeton, where he did his thesis on Solzhenitsyn. Was elected to Congress in the smash Republican year of 1994. When he ran for governor, he did so as an unapologetic Reaganite. That was supposed to be poison in Maryland. He campaigned against gun control, against the minimum wage, against intrusive government generally. He is not the type to give different speeches to different audiences, either: He talks to everyone pretty much the same way.

In German, his name means straightforward, honest, direct—and no one denies that Ehrlich is that. He has pronounced multiculturalism "bunk" and "crap." No Republican is better at calling the Democrats on racial demagoguery. And he has pressed his points in every forum imaginable: from sports shows on the radio to black churches.

In his term as governor, his approval rating never dipped below 50 percent. It stood at about 55 when he lost on Election Day. He had never lost an election in his

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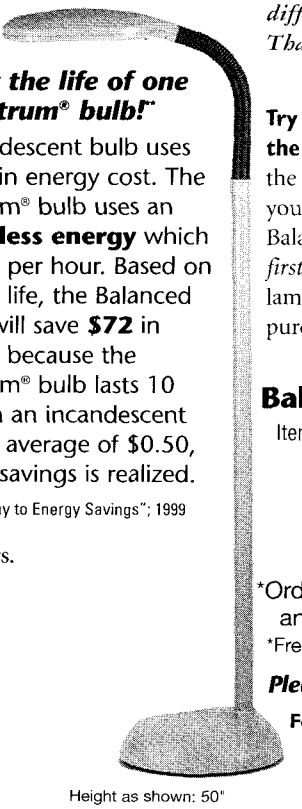

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20 years as a politician, and, a couple of weeks after, he talked freely (as always): "Losing stinks. That's just the fact of it." Moreover, he expected to win, particularly given his approval rating. Ehrlich points out that 55 percent is "pretty good, for an Eastern Republican who governed from the right."

And what does he think about why he lost? He begins his answer by saying that he has forbidden his staff to "engage in that sort of speculation." He has also forbidden himself—"because I hate whiners, I hate excuse-makers, and when you lose, you lose." That said, he offers a few thoughts. Polls told him that, while his administration was popular, voters were "not happy with Washington." Simply put, "we endeavored to separate our record from the national mood, and we just couldn't pull it off in a blue state."

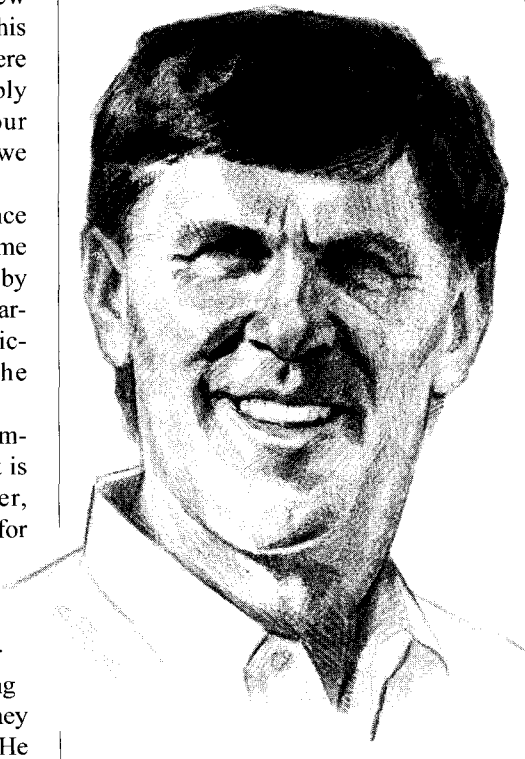
Ehrlich notes that the big difference between the 2002 election and this time was white women: In '02, he won them by a lot; last month, he won them only narrowly. "White, moderate, Democratic-leaning women went home, to the Democratic party."

And that party is far from the Democratic party of old, says Ehrlich. "It is a hard-Left, AFSCME, trial-lawyer, teachers'-union party, and they play for keeps, unlike business."

Ah yes, business. Ehrlich is famous for chastising businessmen—his natural constituency—and to their faces. He once accused them of having "Patty Hearst Syndrome," meaning they were soft on their captors and abusers. He says that businessmen like to go with winners, or probable winners, rather than politicians who support their interests (low taxation, light regulation, etc.). And they are miserable organizers.

The governor cites an example: Facing a Democratic legislature—the only kind of legislature Maryland would have—he defeated an increase in the sales tax. So the retail merchants decided to have a thank-you event for him—to which only 100 people showed up. Ehrlich turned to an aide and said, "This is the problem. The teachers' unions can put 10,000 people outside my house overnight, but when we deliver for business . . ." Not that the merchants weren't appreciative, says Ehrlich. It's just that they have work to do—shops to run—and little time for political activism. By contrast, "trial lawyers and other people who feed off government" are in politics virtually full-time—"and that is a political dilemma for anyone who approaches the issues as we do."

Despite a forbidding environment, Ehrlich had his accomplishments. He takes pride in his fiscal stewardship: He made government smaller, he turned a big deficit into a big surplus—he killed something like $7.5 billion in proposed taxes. Through the four years, he consistently emphasized economic growth, and Maryland flourished.



Gov. Bob Ehrlich

DARREN GYGI

In addition, Ehrlich takes pride in being a sensible environmentalist, and in his appointments. He achieved "racial diversity," he says, but always considered merit, first and foremost. "I stayed true to my conservative principles while reflecting Maryland, which was my goal."

Many conservatives question whether there is any constituency at all for small government—and Ehrlich is one of them. He recalls being in Congress, where "so many people talked conservative and acted liberal. I saw safe-seat members unwilling, or unable, to vote for appropriations cuts," because they feared offending this group or that. In Maryland, Ehrlich did a lot of cutting, "which was very difficult to do, and tough, hard medicine. I stepped on a lot of toes," including those of people who identify themselves as conservatives.

He had a hostile legislature, a hostile political establishment—and a really hostile press. The *Baltimore Sun* was his bête noire, and he was its. Famously, the governor barred his staff from talking to two *Sun* writers, so appalled was he at their performance. And he likes to cite one headline in particular. It said, "Ehrlich Okays Secret Land Deal"—"only I didn't okay it, it wasn't secret, and it wasn't a deal. Other than that, the headline was perfectly accurate."

The *Washington Post* was no friend of Ehrlich either, although it did endorse him for reelection. That was a stunning development. Ehrlich went in for a meeting with the editors, thinking he had "zero chance" of an endorsement. "I let loose, though respectfully," criticizing their coverage, reading objectionable articles back to them. As if in atonement, or with a newfound appreciation, the *Post* said, "Reelect Ehrlich"—causing some conservatives to joke that they would reconsider their support.

Ehrlich is uncertain about his future, but another run in Maryland seems unlikely, "given the direction of the state." He reasons this way: You have what is widely regarded as a successful administration, you have ratings for honesty in the 70s and 80s, you run an excellent campaign, with plenty of money and a smooth organization—and you still lose, by a pretty big margin. "It gives you pause as to what, if anything, can be done." Before 2002, Maryland had not had a Republican governor since Spiro Agnew, elected in 1966. Will it be another 30 or 40 years?

As to Republican prospects nationwide, Ehrlich finds it hard to be optimistic. The GOP faces persistent problems with white women—those vaunted soccer moms—and blacks. Ehrlich spent a lot of time with black Marylanders, "and I was very well received." But black identification with the Democratic party is "very, very strong," and "at this time in history it seems almost impossible to overcome." Perhaps the future will be different, but who knows?

And then there is the problem of selling a small-government philosophy to a pub-

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lic not necessarily hungry for it. Ehrlich contends that it's extremely difficult "to get a '94 brewing": That spectacular year was "as much about Democratic scandals"—the House post office and so on—"as it was about the Contract with America."

Conversation turns to George W. Bush, and Ehrlich credits the president with understanding the "nature of the Terror War." The American public may be a different story. Ehrlich is a Churchill aficionado, and he notes that, in the '30s, the Conservative leader had trouble arousing Britons to the foreign threat. And then, when he won the war, they turned him out. Ehrlich had hoped, and believed, that 9/11 would be the "defining event" of our times. That has not proven to be the case, at all. What else can you think, asks Ehrlich, "when Nancy Pelosi is Speaker"?

The governor is not yet ready to declare a presidential preference for '08. But he will say this, unequivocally: "Because the Democrat has to lose, we have to win." And by "the Democrat," he means Hillary Clinton. "It's critically important for the country, for our national security, that the Republican nominee win in 2008. Another four years, or eight years, of a President Clinton would be intolerable," in this era of war. "We can't afford it. When the country was at relative peace, and the NASDAQ cocktail party was going on, a Clinton could be president. Not today."

Ehrlich has been a sight to behold, governing ultra-liberal Maryland as a "libertarian-influenced conservative" (his self-description). Just about all the forces have been arrayed against him. I mention that he has reminded me of a right-leaning professor on campus, without tenure: His fellow faculty gun for him, the university administration guns for him, the student press and activists gun for him—and they finally get him. Ehrlich laughs heartily at this analogy.

I later remember something he said to me last spring, when I talked with him in Annapolis. Discussing his admiration of Churchill, he said, "He stood on principle, and he was willing to lose." The same applies to Bob Ehrlich. Conservatives have suffered a bitter loss, but it was a kick to have him in for four years. **NR**

■ CULTURE WATCH

Bombing Big-Time

A comedian works without a writer

ROB LONG

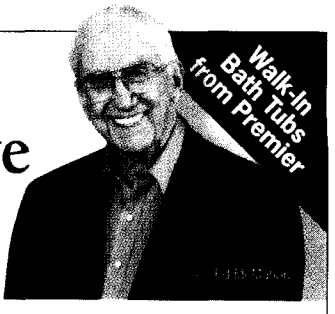
If you've spent any time at all around young people, you know that whiskers are back in fashion. Young men are growing them in all sorts of tufts and outshoots—from wispy, devilish strands around the upper lip and chin to fully inflated muttonchops. Walk into a fashionable bar or club these days and it's hard to know whether the guys are there to pick up girls or stage a Civil War reenactment.

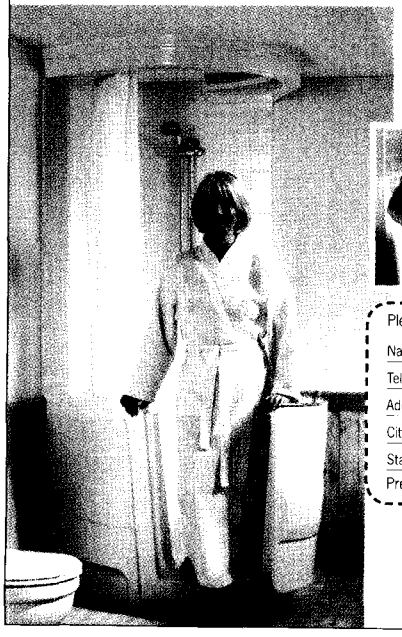
One of the more popular ways to display your whiskers, apparently, is something called a "soul patch," which is a smallish rectangular thatch of facial hair grown right below the lower lip. It covers that small section between the lip and the beginning of the chin, and it's kept tightly clipped, about an inch all around.

More than anything, it looks like a Hitler mustache that has slipped from the top lip to the bottom one. It's amazing what a difference one lip makes. An inch or so to the north, and the "soul patch" isn't so soulful at all: It evokes one of the worst villains of history, a hate-monger and mass-murderer. A slip to the south, and suddenly you're a hipster in a bar in Brooklyn, trying to come up with a good, ironic name for your new band. Same hair, same style, totally different message. Facial hair, like real estate, is all about location.

Let me stipulate, at the outset, that the recent actions of Michael Richards, the gangly comic actor who played Kramer on TV's *Seinfeld*, and who went nuts recently at a Los Angeles comedy club,

"A relaxing bath is something we all have a right to enjoy."





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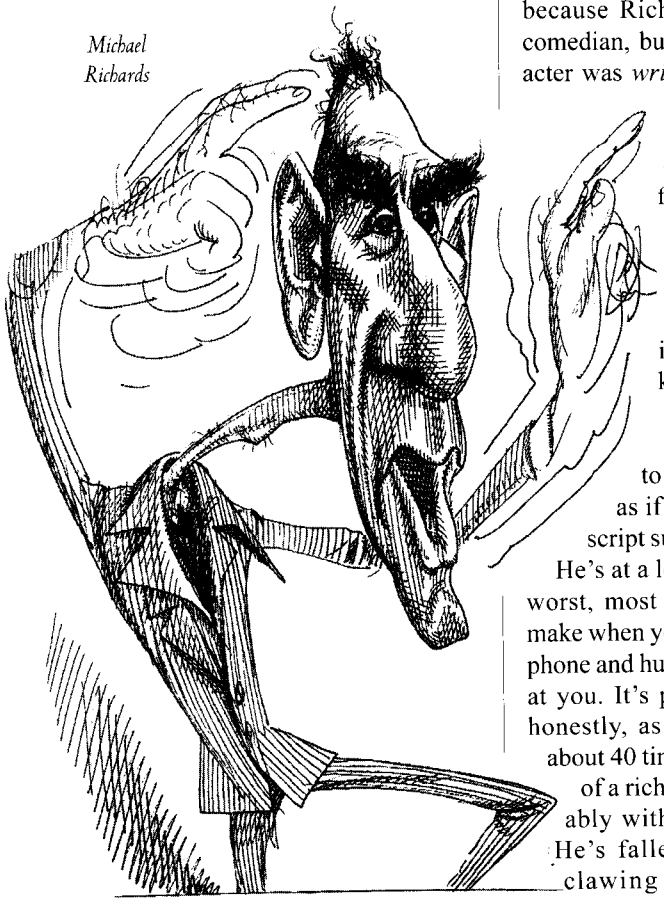
screaming incoherent, racist filth at patrons after some mild heckling, are not only shocking, and disgusting, and disturbing, but also repugnant, and hateful, and unacceptable. And let me add that although most of it was caught on tape and (of course) instantly blasted around the world on websites like TMZ.com and YouTube, what we didn't see would certainly make a bad situation a lot worse. We didn't see the look on the faces of the African-American patrons on the receiving end of Richards's torrent. Imagine how it must have felt to be singled out from the stage by a multimillionaire comedian, to be called *that* word, over and over again, to be driven from the place, and from a seat you paid for.

Plus, it wasn't funny. Look, I'm trying to be very, very careful here, and whether it goes without saying or not, let me say it (again) anyway: That kind of thing, that kind of language, that kind of pointless, furious onslaught is the worst kind of bullying racism. It was a sickening thing to watch. It crossed the line.

But the truth is, the line is pretty way out there to begin with. Racial epithets, slavery jokes, *that* word—these are all old chestnuts of the comedy-club circuit. Chris Rock, Cedric the Entertainer—we can go all the way back to Lenny Bruce if we have to—are all enormously gifted, hugely talented comedians for whom racial differences and, yes, *that* word form the cornerstones of their material. Walk into any comedy club in the country and prepare to be immersed in the last unashamedly un-PC place in America. All of the hate and bigotry and prejudice that has been painstakingly policed from our public arena, all of the fun stuff, in other words, that we've scrubbed and bleached out of the national conversation gets swept back out from under the rug and passed around, for a small cover charge and a two-drink minimum. In the hands of someone funny, the results can be sidesplitting. In the hands of someone lazy and untalented, not so much.

Let's face it: Michael Richards's big break, playing Jerry's zany, unpredictable neighbor, Kramer, on *Seinfeld*, was basically a door joke: Kramer would suddenly burst in looking both confused and aggressive, door swinging, hair electrified, audience goes wild, repeated roughly 200 times. It worked partly because Richards is a gifted physical comedian, but mostly because his character was *written* by *writers* who wrote *actual jokes* and *lines of dialogue*, which are crucial to the whole being-funny enterprise.



Michael Richards

Watch the tape, if you can stand it, of Richards's meltdown. Notice the way he vamps emptily after the initial blast of *that* word. He keeps prowling the stage, like a wounded animal, searching for something to say. His head darts around, as if looking for cue cards, or a script supervisor to give him a hint. He's at a loss for words, which is the worst, most amateur mistake you can make when you're on stage with a microphone and hundreds of people are staring at you. It's painful to watch—though, honestly, as a writer, I've watched it about 40 times, never tiring of the sight of a rich sitcom actor flailing miserably without a script in his hands. He's fallen down a well and he's clawing desperately to get out. Richards earned some $600,000 *per episode* of *Seinfeld* in its final years, repeating lines that some writers, earning far, far less, wrote. Take them away and what do you get? Weird, nonsensical racist "jokes" punctuated by terrified eye darting. I'm awfully sorry; as a comedy writer, I'm really enjoying this.

At one point, near the end, he even tries to turn it all into some kind of social lesson. "You see?" he says to (what's left of) the audience. "You see what's buried beneath you m****rf*****s?" Whoa! Beneath *us*? And then the finale: "You see? You see? There's still those words, those words, those words . . . " like it was all an act, all part of some grand set piece he's been working on, and the big finish is some awful, stomach-turning plea for racial understanding, as if he's breached the public peace for some lofty, *see how racist we all are?* purpose. And then a few days later he appears on *Letterman*, all shaky-voiced and pale, projecting baffled contrition, as if the last thing he remembered was standing on the stage, and then, suddenly, someone came along and hit him with a giant racism stick.

What nonsense! Look, I'm perfectly happy to accept that he isn't a racist. Really, he probably isn't: Real racists, honest-to-goodness kill-'em-all Bull Connors, have the good sense to bury their feelings deep, exhuming them only by firelight, surrounded by friends, preferably in white linen. Richards isn't a racist; he's a clumsy, unfunny, lazy pseudo-provocateur, as his pathetic attempts to climb out of the well prove. "You see? There's still those words, those words, those words . . ." Thanks, Mike. Right up until the moment you took the stage, I was unaware that there were *some* words that pushed the race panic button. Thanks, man. He's that peculiar, rare event: a *liberal* caught acting racist. Again: I'm awfully sorry; I'm really enjoying this.

Ultimately, after the YouTube mouse-clicks stop, and the Jesse Jackson Apology Pageant winds down, we're left with this: Stand-up comedy is really, really hard to do. Give a silent thanks for the immense, bursting talents of the people who manage to make a living at it, even the really so-so ones, like Dane Cook. Standing in front of people, trying to make them laugh, writing and honing

ROMAN GENN

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bits and observations into polished pieces of theatrical craftsmanship, complete with a dazzling, provocative start and a laugh-out-loud finish—man, talk about hard work. Compare it with Michael Richards's childish outburst. He doesn't need sensitivity training. He needs writers.

(A quick time-out here, if you don't mind, just to reiterate: What Richards said on stage, and his constant, offensive, mean-spirited use of *that* word, constitutes unacceptable behavior for a performer, or any civilized person. Okay?)

Don Rickles, who knows a thing or two about how to insult an audience and get away with it, used to end his act with a heartfelt song and a weird, maudlin toast. "I dream of the day the bigots disappear," he'd say. And then he'd add, "L'chaim!" as he raised a glass.

It was an odd little flourish, really, after an hour or two of non-stop (and hilarious) material based, essentially, on the principle that Puerto Ricans are lazy, Jews are stingy, African Americans steal, Poles are stupid, and Koreans will eat your dog.

But maybe that's what happened to Richards. He went too far, too deep, too angry, without any material to back him up, and in the end, he couldn't buy back his improvised (and unfunny) diatribe with a raise of the glass and an "I dream of the day the bigots disappear." Maybe it really matters if you're funny or not, and Don Rickles, Chris Rock, Cedric the Entertainer—those guys are *funny*. Their soul patches are firmly in the right place.

And so is mine. Let me say it again, in case I wasn't clear: I deplore what Richards said on that stage in Los Angeles, and I especially reject the hateful, violent way he said it. I, like Don Rickles, dream of the day the bigots disappear. Except I won't add the "l'chaim" part. I mean, don't get me started on the Jews. **NR**

■ **CULTURE WATCH II**

Nancy with the Pretty Face

Speaker Pelosi and other characters of the moment

FLORENCE KING

"I'm looking forward to moving forward" sounds just like George W. Bush but it's a safe bet that Election 2006 cured him of this partic-

Florence King's NATIONAL REVIEW columns are collected in *STET, Damnit!: The Misanthrope's Corner, 1991 to 2002*. She can be reached at P.O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, VA 22404.

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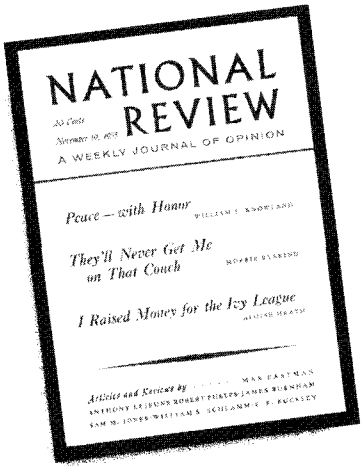
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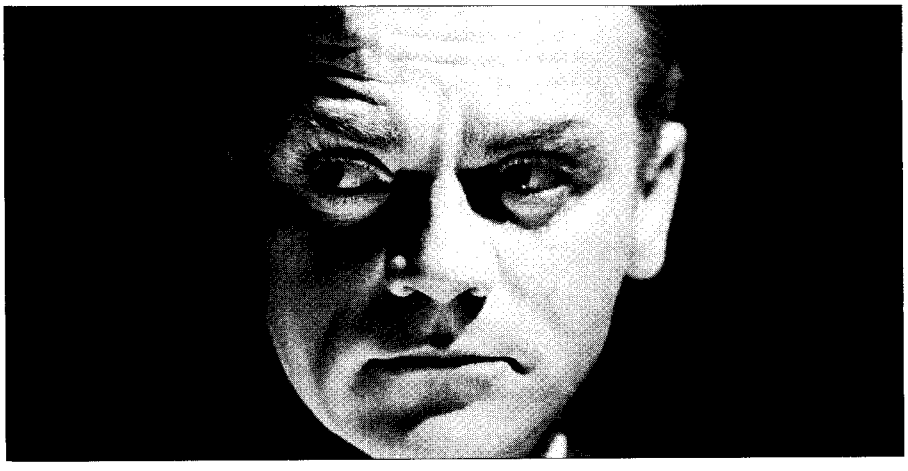
ular locution. His days of looking forward are so manifestly behind him that we can only hope that he doesn't spend the next two years revisiting his days of wine and Four Roses.

The glitzy cable coverage of Election Night made me look backward to a time when spats-wearing clerks on ladders chalked in returns on a giant blackboard set up in the ballroom of one of those grand old hotels with marble floors and gilded acanthus leaves that were said to have something called "character." This year's news studios looked like nightclubs—not just any nightclub, either, but the one designed by Salvador Dalí for the dream sequence in Hitchcock's *Spellbound*.



James Webb? No, James Cagney.

JOHN KOBAL FOUNDATION/GETTY HULTON ARCHIVE

The graphics achieved chaos of such Biblical proportions that it was hard to tell a pot of message from a mess of pottage. The most puzzling was CNN's gas-tank gauge with a needle set to swing to Empty for behind and Full for ahead; or maybe it was supposed to be a speedometer to measure how fast the vote count was going. Another channel cluttered up the screen with a stack of ascending blocks representing vote percentages that looked like the print-check icon on a fax machine that shows you how much ink is left in your cartridge. Both distractions disappeared sometime during the evening, but they provided a weary reminder of that American specialty: the improvement that only makes things worse, like software upgrades or those redesigned containers that say "Tear Here" but never do.

But the really alarming aspect of the 2006 coverage was the strange new fairness doctrine spreading through the ranks of the talking heads, a speech habit of the sort heretofore associated with obsessive-compulsives who use words as charms to ward off bad luck and curses. Led by Chris Matthews, they have begun to pronounce "Missouri" in two different ways in the same sentence: Missouree and Missouruh. Matthews has been bothered by this for months; once, on *Hardball*, he began speculating aloud, as though talking to himself, that it was pronounced one way by natives, or maybe Midwesterners in general, and another way by everyone else. Finally, he began to take turns, and other heads followed suit. Some may think it's a problem for Henry Higgins, but I say it's a problem for Sigmund Freud. Our pursuit of equality has done its work; now, everybody is right and nobody is wrong and our speech must reflect the alternate reality we have created. Political correctness is steadily yielding to total babbling incoherence, which is why the redesigned and upgraded American eagle is clutching electroshock cables in one claw and straitjacket ties in the other.

You are probably on your bed of pain right about now, but the election results contain hidden conservative benefits if only we look for them. I am not referring to the civics-class rationalizations, such as the inherent safety of checks and balances, that have already taken on a hollow ring. I'm talking psychological warfare big time.

In a word, give thanks for Nancy Pelosi. Never mind her politics, just look at her and what do you see? A woman of 66 who has had five children yet looks 46, with a beautiful figure and a face as pretty as the proverbial picture. Think of it: not glam-

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orous, not sexy, but pretty. When was the last time you heard a woman called that? Today's idea of a compliment is "hot." You can't have too many anachronisms and the word *pretty* is the most anachronistic of them all. Now listen to her and what do you hear? A voice that is "soft, gentle, and low—an excellent thing in woman," as King Lear said.

Put it all together and what have we got? A brunette Phyllis Schlafly. And whose bona fides did Schlafly single-handedly reduce to a condition approaching mincemeat? The feminists—especially her counterpart, the ur-feminist Betty Friedan, whose face would stop a clock and whose voice would inspire recruits for the French Foreign Legion. Schlafly's triumph in the battle over the Equal Rights Amendment came about through her command of pristine classical logic and her Ciceronian debating style, but the average citizen doesn't pay much attention to arguments. It was the stark difference between the women themselves that put Schlafly over the top and stopped ERA. Like it or not, star power is everything, and for a woman, that means looks and femininity.

Now history has repeated itself and given us another mismatched set. Nancy Pelosi is conservatism's Great Blue Hope of 2008. The more the American people see and hear her, the more likely it is that they will come to regard our greatest nightmare as a comic strip called Hillary the Horrible. True, it will be a subconscious reaction, but that's the best kind. Tucker Carlson has already had one. A week after the election while interviewing Sen. Barbara Boxer, another pretty, soft-voiced pol reminiscent of Pelosi, he suddenly said: "Why don't you run for president instead of Hillary Clinton? I like you better than her." He tried to pass it off as a lighthearted quip but it was obvious that a part of him really meant it. So be glad that Nancy Pelosi is our first female Speaker of the House. It's the best defense against what we at NATIONAL REVIEW call a b*llbreaker.

Appearance and voice also predominated in what, to me, was the most interesting, as well as the eeriest, election result. Jim Webb's victory had little to do with "macaca" and still less with George Allen's eleventh-hour lit-crit debut as a down-home Lionel Trilling. I think it came about because Webb has emerged as the Lon Chaney of American politics, a man of a thousand faces with an inexplicable ability to be all things to all people without pandering.

He looks like both the good cop and the bad cop. He also looks like a conservative Republican before the term got weighted down with all the subdivisions it now carries—Herbert Hoover's younger brother whose full face is going to jowls that are starting to blouse over a stiff high collar. But he also looks like a labor leader of the Thirties, one of the burly, rolled-sleeve Reuther brothers, or the prototypical Workingman in the post-office murals painted by Federal artists put on the government payroll by the New Deal.

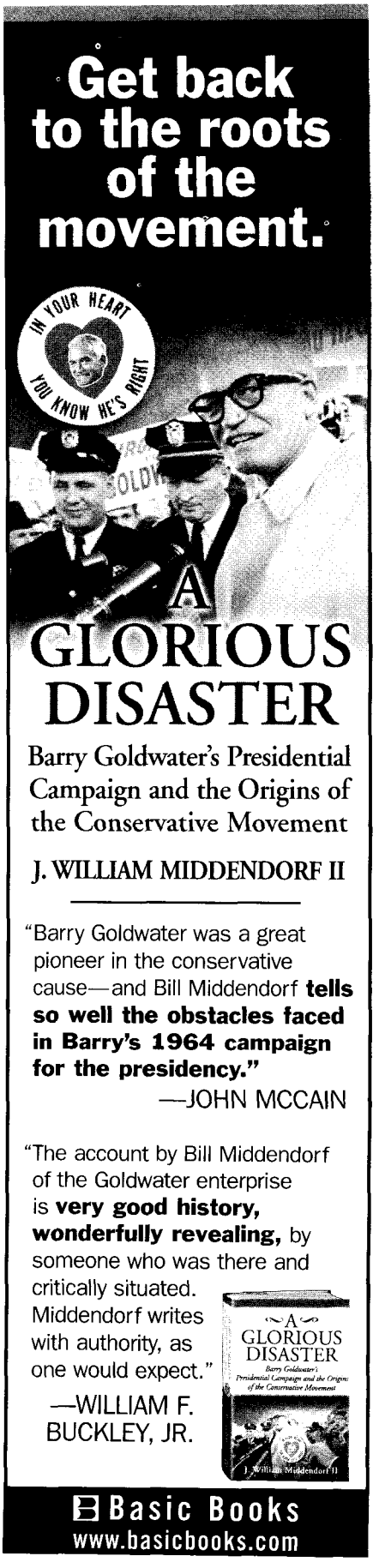
He also bears actual physical resemblances to real people: Lt. Gen. Lewis "Chesty" Puller, USMC; Spencer Tracy as the tough priest in *San Francisco*; and, of particular significance for a politician, James Cagney, a sure vote-getter in view of the number of men who secretly dream of smashing a grapefruit in Hillary's face.

His voice is less familiar. He has been heard nationally on a couple of Sunday talk shows, but these shows, like political ads and televised debates, tamp down even full-throated types, and Webb is laconic. It is only when you hear him speak in person that you begin to realize something: He has a church organ of a voice, a bass-baritone so resonant that it could rattle a chandelier. I grew up listening to what was reverently called "That Voice," but Webb's has none of the aristocratic paternalism of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Rather, it was made for leather-lunged clarion calls. If he ever lets it loose, we could wake up one morning to find that we have another William Jennings Bryan.

Last, a progress report: I have always said that NATIONAL REVIEW readers are the crème de la crème, and once again I have been proved right. In my previous piece I told you about my efforts to find out where I had heard the word "macaca" before. I just got a letter from a reader who quoted the following passage from one of his favorite novels.

"No wonder there are bandits in the Campo when there are none but thieves, swindlers, and sanguinary macaques to rule us in Sta. Marta."

It's from Chapter Eight of *Nostromo* by Joseph Conrad. **NR**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Economist on a White Horse

How Milton Friedman saved the world

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

'THERE is but one event, but that is an event for the world—Burke is dead!" wrote Canning, the Tory wit and future prime minister, to a diplomat friend who had asked for the latest news. "He is the man that will mark this age . . . to all time."

It would be no exaggeration to say the same of Milton Friedman, who died this November. The Age of Friedman began approximately in 1979–80 when his disciples, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, took power in Britain and America—the two great centers of world economic thinking—and began to apply his ideas. It was entrenched more widely following the discrediting of planned socialist economies in the late 1980s and the consequent spread of anti-inflationary and free-market solutions throughout the First, Second, and Third Worlds. And the Age of Friedman will continue until some new economic ills emerge that require a new diagnosis from a new theoretician.

By the time of his death Friedman's victory was more or less complete, as the respectful obituaries even in staunchly liberal newspapers conceded. But the campaign to establish (or revive) his classical-liberal ideas had been hard and long, beginning in the late 1940s when he joined the economics faculty of the University of Chicago and not glimpsing success until the late 1970s. Indeed, in a development that would have delighted a Gibbon or an Evelyn Waugh, Richard Nixon declared that "we are all Keynesians now" at the very moment when the Age of Keynes, Friedman's great theoretical antagonist, was drawing visibly to its close.

Friedman's antagonism was entirely theoretical. Though he was to replace Keynes as the dominant influence on world economics, he admired the great English economist. He submitted his first theoretical paper to Keynes's *Economic Journal*. (Keynes rejected it.) As late as 1974 he described Keynes's *General Theory* as "a great book, at once more naive and profound than 'Keynesian economics.'" William Coleman of the Australian National University rightly describes this remark as "marvelously apposite." For the edifice of Keynesianism that Friedman eventually brought down was both massively imposing and crucially flawed. A caricature on the 1970 paperback cover of *Keynes and After* by Michael Stewart brilliantly captured the imposing nature of Keynesian orthodoxy at its summit. It showed the Sage relaxing in an armchair. Behind him was a graph showing high unemployment until it disappeared behind his right shoulder and then showing low unemployment as it emerged from behind his left thigh. Before Keynes, you

Mr. O'Sullivan, an NR editor-at-large, is the author of the newly published *The President, the Pope, and the Prime Minister: Three Who Changed the World.*

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see, we had suffered from joblessness and slumps; after him, we enjoyed prosperity and a low, stable rate of unemployment. Q.E.D.

This picture expressed more than an economic theory; it summed up an entire moral and political outlook called social democracy. For the economic theory underpinning this success presupposed that government had the principal role in running the economy through macroeconomic policy. When the economy was in danger of inflationary "overheating," government would reduce spending and raise taxes; when it was moving into recession or deflation, government would pump money into the economy through tax cuts and spending programs. Deficits would stimulate us out of slumps; surpluses would cool down inflation. This administrative balancing act was the magic that would enable a modern economy to grow permanently without suffering the exaggerated slumps and inflationary fevers that had previously characterized capitalism.

To be fair, the theory was never actually applied as Keynes had prescribed. Postwar Britain, where Keynes was a secular saint, ran deficits consistently even though most of the time its economy was booming modestly. Keynesians were far more opposed to unemployment than to inflation and they had adopted Keynesian economics in part because it justified a dominant role for government. Keynes himself was well aware that this risked igniting inflation. At a meeting in Cambridge, he told his friend and critic Friedrich von Hayek that he intended to correct his followers' errors when he had the time. He died shortly afterwards with the Keynesians still uncorrected.

For a time Keynesian economics worked as smoothly as the caricature suggested. But the fundamental flaw was lying in wait.

For a time Keynesian economics worked as smoothly as the caricature suggested. But the fundamental flaw was lying in

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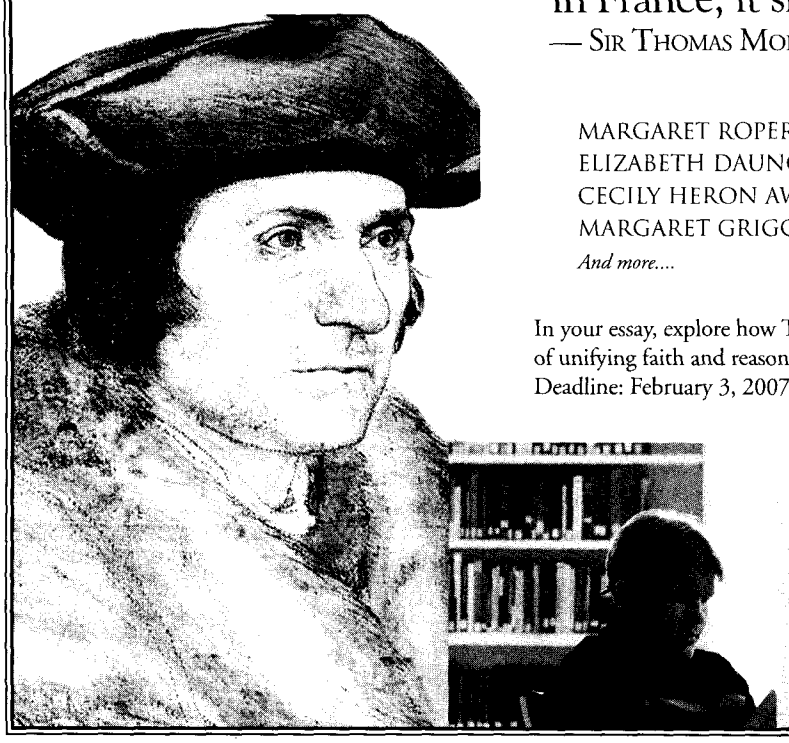
in France, it should not fail to go.
— SIR THOMAS MORE



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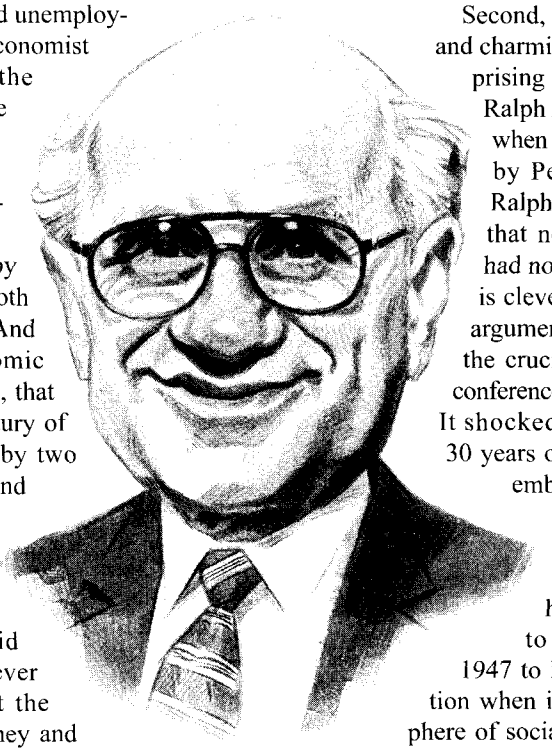
wait. Keynesians taught that inflation and unemployment were opposites: The more you had of one, the less you had of the other. Given this choice, they preferred to maintain full employment by running a continuing mild inflation through a lax monetary policy that accommodated wage and price hikes. Friedman challenged this view. He pointed out that a monetary stimulus could produce only a temporary rise in production (and so fall in unemployment). Once people realized that the value of their money was falling under even mild inflation, they would build expected future inflation into wage demands and price hikes. Inflation would then accelerate further, unemployment would rise too, and eventually the economy would be disrupted as the signaling effect of prices was destroyed in a hyper-inflationary crisis. He outlined this revolutionary analysis in his 1970 lecture "The Counter-Revolution in Monetary Theory."

In the mid-1970s, Friedman was proved right. An "impossible" combination of inflation and unemployment—dubbed "stagflation" by liberal economist Paul Samuelson—spread throughout the industrial world. Among its victims were President Carter in the U.S. and Britain's Labour prime minister, James Callaghan. An American "misery index" of 21 percent and Britain's similar "winter of discontent" ensured that they were replaced by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Both were admirers and friends of Friedman. And these two leaders embarked on economic policies, broadly inspired by his theories, that have given their countries a quarter century of fast economic growth interrupted only by two short and shallow recessions in the U.S. and one deeper recession in the U.K.



Their success was achieved in part because they followed Friedman's broad recipe for slaying the dragon. Not always precisely—Friedman once said that monetarism in Britain was "whatever Margaret Thatcher did." But they got the essentials right: Restrain the rise in money and prices would stop rising. When that happened, the supply side of the economy—its manufacturers, service-providers, and other producers—would no longer be plagued by monetary instability. They would then be better able to plan and produce for the future. Friedman's prescription for monetary policy proved to be as correct as his prediction of stagflation. Inflation fell steadily and stabilized at a low annual level in both countries and throughout the world. The period since 1980 has been the Age of Friedman economically as the period from 1945 to 1975 was the Age of Keynes.

THE CHARACTER OF AN IDEA

How did Friedman do it? Naturally, we should not overlook the trivial fact that his economic ideas were correct. That is a great advantage if your aim is to increase human wealth and happiness. Usually, however, the mere correctness of policies is not sufficient for their adoption. Friedman's ideas had to overcome a vast residue of intellectual and political hostility to classical liberalism on both left and right. His views were seen and scorned as "flat-earth economics" in the 1950s and 1960s. He overcame these obstacles for three reasons.

First, he was an accomplished statistician who got the technicalities right. Friedman had the skills—and, together with collaborators such as Anna Schwartz, he did the work—to overcome objections through sheer weight of evidence. Other able economists from the classical-liberal tradition—notably, Hayek, Lionel Robbins, and William Hutt—had developed early critiques of Keynes that in retrospect look powerful and prescient. But their arguments, unfashionable at the time, were simply ignored. Friedman escaped their fate by compelling agreement. If you were disagreeing with him, you were disagreeing with the facts he had assiduously and scrupulously assembled. And when the future facts of his stagflation prediction were confirmed, that settled the matter.

Second, as a debater he was brilliant, fearless, and charming. He won converts in the most surprising places. In a recent article on the late Ralph Harris, I cited the occasion in London when Milton was so fiercely cross-examined by Peter Jay of the London *Times* that Ralph felt obliged to apologize. Milton said that no apology was necessary since Jay had not been rude. Besides, he added, Peter is clever; he'll come over to our side of the argument. Less than a decade later, Jay wrote the crucial paragraph in the annual Labour-conference speech of Prime Minister Callaghan. It shocked his Labour audience, abandoned 30 years of official British Keynesianism, and embraced Friedmanite monetarism three years before Mrs. Thatcher came to power. That's winning the debate.

Third, along with Hayek and a handful of others, Friedman helped to found the Mont Pelerin Society in 1947 to keep alive the classical-liberal tradition when it seemed lost in the postwar atmosphere of socialist inevitability. Over the years the MPS grew into a large and influential intellectual network that both supported and spread the ideas of its leading members. Thus, Friedman's monetarism could rely for support on what Hayek called "second-hand dealers in ideas" in Europe and Asia when he promulgated them in the 1960s. Ralph Harris, for instance, was secretary of the MPS for many years; other members included Keith Joseph and Geoffrey Howe, leading members in the Thatcher governments. The counterrevolution in monetary economics had counterrevolutionaries in waiting around the world. Milton was in a minority, but he was not a lonely voice.

Once Friedman received the Nobel Prize in 1976, he became the principal public spokesman for free-market ideas. Other Nobel laureates disappear into the obscurity of a learned institution; he went on, with his wife Rose (also an accomplished economist), to become a television star through the series *Free to Choose*. The series was translated into several languages and seems to be showing somewhere in the world at any given

DARREN GYGI

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moment. When Friedman met Queen Elizabeth, she said: "I know you. Philip is always watching you on the telly."

He used this unique status to advocate, popularize, and often get adopted a series of public-policy reforms. These ideas were not always conservative, but they reflected a faith in markets and human freedom that equaled the faith of Keynesians in government action. As Allan Meltzer, his friend and fellow monetarist, points out, they include: ending the military draft, floating currencies, earned income tax credits, education vouchers, and drug liberalization. The first three have been adopted—floating currencies because a Friedman prediction (that the fixed-exchange-rate system of Bretton Woods would break down) was once again confirmed by events. Education vouchers are slowly making headway against the opposition of the teachers' unions. Drug liberalization remains controversial. But few economists have had such success in persuading government to adopt specific policies—let alone to surrender some of its power in doing so.

Milton Friedman was an agnostic, like many of the great liberal thinkers, but he did not exhibit a contemptuous dismissal of religious belief. As Peter Robinson has revealed on National Review Online, Milton thanked him for his promise of prayer for his recovery. He appreciated the sentiment even if he doubted its efficacy. That was a response very typical of Milton's general outlook. There was a balance, a sanity, a reasonableness, and a decency in him that bore some similarity to the peace of mind offered by deep religious faith. He seemed to be a cheerfully good man who needed neither the consolations of religion nor its restraints on malice.

On the website of the London Social Affairs Unit, William Coleman casts an interesting light on his sunny character:

> Friedman's psychological profile in general was congruent with the free market. The free market is brash, impolitic, competitive, utilitarian, and innovative. Friedman was brash, impolitic, competitive, utilitarian, and innovative. Yet while the free market—like Friedman—is tearless, it should also be allowed that the market, like Friedman, is neither rancorous nor vengeful. For all his unvarnished speech and pungent judgments, Friedman seemed to be without enmity or resentment. He got "along well personally" with Joan Robinson [the Keynesian economist]. He found Andreas Papandreou [the Greek socialist] to be "very helpful." [Swedish socialist] Gunnar Myrdal was "awfully charming and intelligent."

One might make the same point in a slightly different way: Friedman was one of those rare souls who seem to be untouched by Original Sin or at least by its more vicious aspects. To be sure, he was not humble. He could hardly avoid knowing that he was far cleverer than almost anyone he met and had greatly benefited the world by his work. But he approached both a mass television audience and a single nervous student with the same democratic respect. He assumed that they were capable of understanding his arguments and that, if he proved his case, they would respond honestly to it. He never despised opponents nor tried to deceive listeners with deliberate obscurity. And he bore the slanders of the 1970s Left with fortitude and astonishing good humor.

His friends will miss a cheerful companion, economics a great explorer, and the world a liberator. Rest in Peace. **NR**

■ 2008

A Vote for Rudy

Why Giuliani should be president

RICHARD BROOKHISER

I HAVE voted against Rudy Giuliani, and I have voted for him. Voting for him is better; it's what I hope conservatives, Republicans, and Americans will do in 2008.

Giuliani formed a presidential exploratory committee after the midterm elections, formally entering campaign land, in which every utterance by and about him will be analyzed and its potential effect polled. Not that it hasn't been going on for years. My favorite of the early reax to Rudy was flagged by columnist Deroy Murdock: An anti-Giuliani website, SayNoToRudy.org, posted by social conservatives in Ohio, pulled the plug on itself after deciding that "Mr. Giuliani is truly a committed Republican and an accomplished conservative on many issues." But in estimating Giuliani's worth it is less useful to say what people say about him; more useful to examine his past, and his character.

Giuliani won his first election in 1993, in his second race for mayor of New York. He had made his name as a scourge of high-profile criminals when he was U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York (1983–9), hammering the five families, crooked Democratic bosses, and Michael Milken. Yet conservatives had reason not to vote for him: His social views were liberal—he was for abortion and gay rights—and his opinions on political economy were untried. He ran with the endorsement of New York's tiny Liberal party. To run against him, the less-tiny Conservative party picked George Marlin, a scholarly Catholic, and an investment banker who knew his financial nuts and bolts. (He is also a friend of mine.) Marlin could only tip the election to Democratic incumbent David Dinkins, but he made the case for the politics of purity: Hold out until we get Mr. Right, instead of holding our noses in the voting booth.

I heeded Marlin's call, and so cast the unwisest vote of my life. Giuliani won in a close race, and then proceeded to save the city. When I see the shoals of kids in Union Square, fresh from their new NYU dorms or packed like sardines in nearby apartments, I know they cannot imagine what the square was like in 1993, when they were toddlers: raggedy bushes, lawns of packed dirt, and hollow-eyed weirdos muttering "Smokes, smokes." New York's poor neighborhoods were far worse, as innocents were robbed, murdered, and felled by the stray fusillades of drug dealers.

Everyone acknowledges Giuliani's achievement. (Perhaps the most eloquent tribute is the silent imitation of his successor, Michael Bloomberg, who, despite his billionaire's arrogance, has continued Giuliani's success by continuing with his methods.)

Mr. Brookhiser, an NR senior editor, is the author, most recently, of *What Would the Founders Do? Our Questions, Their Answers.*

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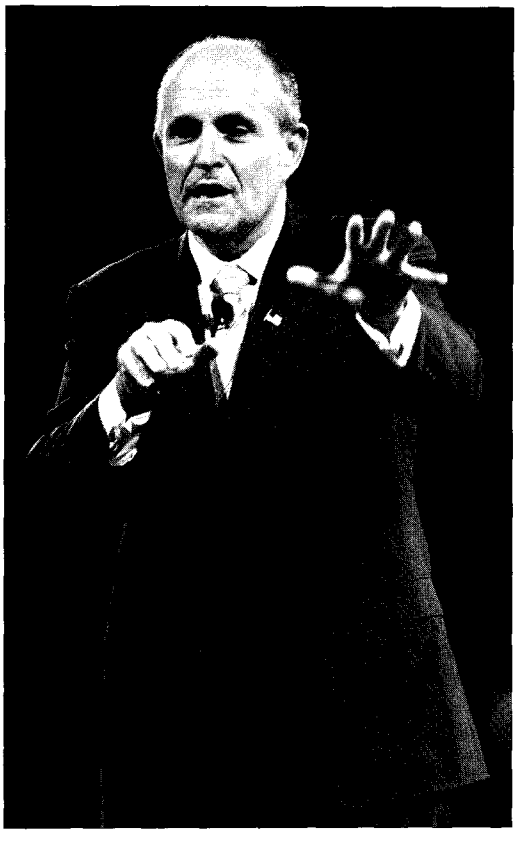
But how Giuliani succeeded initially is still not well understood.

The crime position of conservatives since the Sixties was simple: Jail the crooks. Candidate Marlin told audiences he would "put them on barges" if he had to. Yet Mario Cuomo, New York's liberal Democratic governor, was building prisons at a great rate, and still the crime rate soared. The solution to New York's (and the nation's) crime problem lay in asking which crooks should be pursued, and what conclusions could be drawn from their activity. A revolution in policing had begun with a pair of academics, George Kelling and James Q. Wilson, and a handful of smart cops in New York and Boston—William Bratton, Jack Maple, John Timoney. They emphasized the importance of recapturing the public space by nabbing petty offenders who often turned out to be major ones, and by tracking the ebb and flow of crime patterns daily, the better to react quickly. But you had to have your ears open to know this was going on. *City Journal*, the policy magazine of the conservative urban-affairs think tank the Manhattan Institute, ran articles by Kelling and others on the new policing in the early Nineties. Fred Siegel, America's only witty urbanologist, brought them to Mayor Dinkins's attention. "He brushed me off."



Rudolph Giuliani

Not Giuliani. "He is much more wonkish and intellectual than people give him credit for," Siegel says. "Because of the tough-guy exterior, they don't notice. There is a lot of Newt in him: Let's take this apart and see how it works." Siegel also calls him "a Republican Clinton." Clinton, who never held a position he would not betray? Siegel admits the difference. "Giuliani is not poll first and act later. He is, Let me figure this out and bring people along."

The mayor of New York, unlike other mayors, is a powerful official, but he does not operate in a vacuum. Giuliani showed what Siegel calls "administrative imagination," looking for "effective levers" in the bureaucracy, as opposed to "formal" ones. He cultivated members of the City Council—small fry, compared with congressmen, but with egos equally big. The courts he waited out. They were "wired for the ACLU," as Siegel puts it, so Giuliani would stake out a position—e.g., zoning XXX shops into remote corners—then fight delaying actions when his policies were challenged. In the court of public opinion, he waged war on liberalism, as articulated by the *New York Times*. "He mocked them," says Siegel, "he made fun of their assumptions."

A FATAL DAY

Despite his success and a smashing reelection in 1997 (I supported him this time, along with 57 percent of the voters), Giuliani's two terms were boisterous. Imagine eight years of *macaca* wars. Then came 9/11.

Although everyone was surprised by it, Giuliani was well positioned to grasp what had happened, and to keep a grip on his understanding as the years passed. Giuliani had spoken of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in his first mayoral inaugural address, in a paean to Gotham spunk ("New Yorkers of the 1990s have the same ingenuity, sensitivity, talent, and courage that our ancestors had in building our great city"). The methods he had used to fight the mob turned out to be essential in cracking the Jersey City terror cell that planned the 1993 bombing, and other attacks. Andy McCarthy, lead prosecutor of Omar Abdel-Rahman, the Blind Sheik, says that the Justice Department used Giuliani's "RICO paradigm," not focusing on "foot soldiers" but "peeling back the case" to "big organizations in time and space." Most important was Giuliani's moral clarity. Siegel's wonk coexists with a man of passion. Giuliani "saw this issue early on as very black and white," says McCarthy. "Part of what people who don't like Rudy don't like about him is how headstrong he is." In 1995 Giuliani ejected Yasser Arafat from a Lincoln Center concert honoring the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. "Maybe we should wake people up to the way this terrorist is being romanticized." After 9/11 he returned $10 million from a Saudi prince who had suggested that our Palestinian policy had helped cause the attack. In his speeches Giuliani dates the run-up to 9/11 from the 1985 murder of wheelchair-bound Leon Klinghoffer by Palestinian hijackers.

Then there is the *x* of leadership, which is more than smarts or passion, or even both together. Woody Allen said 80 percent of success is showing up. One hundred percent of leadership is showing up, and doing the right thing—and doing it again, and again, and again. As the years pass, more and more of those kids in Union Square cannot imagine having been in Union Square themselves in the days and weeks after 9/11, and what a witless mob we all were then. The firemen and cops wrote their heroism in ash. Giuliani told the rest of us that we were brave, and thereby encouraged us to be so. The one mistake he made in the aftermath was dallying with the possibility that Albany might waive New York City's two-term limit, thus allowing him to run again (the terrorists had struck on Primary Day for the 2001 election). George Washington would not have made that mistake, but he couldn't have done the rest of it better.

As in 1993, there are problems. Do you have a few hours? Giuliani is down-the-line pro-abortion, including even partial-birth abortions. "I don't see my position on that changing," he said in 1999. He opposes a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. "I don't think it's ripe for decision at this point," he said in 2004. "I certainly wouldn't support [a ban] at this time."

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As mayor of New York he administered some of the nation's toughest laws against gun ownership. His sabbatical from office-holding has allowed him to duck out of the white-hot immigration debate of the last year, but his long-term position has been refried Emma Lazarus. Siegel, his great booster, told National Review Online that Giuliani's lax enforcement of immigration laws allowed "several of the [9/11] hijackers to operate comfortably in Brooklyn only a few blocks from my house."

Then there are the personal problems, which are sometimes also political. Giuliani's first marriage ended with an annulment that was risible even by the standards of the Catholic Church in modern America (he realized, after 14 years, that he and his wife were second cousins). His second marriage exploded in an ugly divorce. The third time may be the charm: Judith Nathan seems to have humanized him a bit, as did a brush with prostate cancer, the killer of his father. He needs humanizing. His ferocious dedication is the obverse of rigidity and repression. Did he repress his memory of his father's criminal past when he went through his FBI clearances?

His personality is all of a piece. His wife may retrofit some virtues on him, but no one else will. His political problems sit there like turds in a punch bowl. What can social conservatives make of them?

Giuliani left himself some wiggle room in his remarks on gay marriage ("at this point," "at this time"), and a casuist could find it on partial-birth abortion ("I don't see . . ."). More important, all of his radioactive positions, except on immigration, might be modified by the men and women he nominated as judges. On the eve of the mid-term elections, Giuliani hailed Chief Justice Roberts and Justice Alito as model judges, "principled individuals who can be trusted to defend the original intent of the Constitution rather than trying to legislate their own political beliefs from the bench." He called their appointments "signs of promises kept."

Social conservatives will be keen to know whom Giuliani will promise to appoint. They already know where he is coming from, and many of them seem to support him nonetheless. The idea that Giuliani's strong poll numbers will blow away once people learn his whole record is probably a fantasy. He has been on the national stage for 13 years, and what people don't know they can infer from his incorrigible New York-ness. Many social conservatives have already made a calculation about leadership. The Romans said that in war the laws are silent. Neither Christians nor humanists can believe that. But in war one wants a war leader, who may be otherwise unacceptable. Early in World War II England picked a washed-up journalist with a lot of sleazy friends.

Rudy Giuliani saved a city with a larger population than Arizona, Massachusetts, or Virginia, the states of John McCain, Mitt Romney, and George Allen. He helped city and country take a harder blow than Pearl Harbor. These are two serious public achievements, which are two more than anyone else in the 2008 race, Republican or Democrat, can show. Achievement is not an infallible guide to performance in office. Abraham Lincoln, wrote the New York diarist George Templeton Strong, was nominated in 1860 "because he cut a great many rails," and he did fine. But achievement or the lack of it is all fate lets us see of our candidates in advance. You can choose a leader. Or you can choose someone else. **NR**

■ 2008 II

Evangelicals for Romney?

A major question of the coming period

JOHN J. MILLER

EARLIER this year, Mitt Romney, the undeclared GOP presidential candidate, came to the attention of Mark DeMoss, a public-relations specialist in Atlanta. "I had not met him, but his stand on traditional marriage as governor of Massachusetts convinced me that he's a real leader," says DeMoss. "Evangelical voters can put their faith in him."

DeMoss ought to know. His PR firm, the DeMoss Group, represents some of the most prominent Christian organizations in the country: the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Campus Crusade for Christ International, and T. D. Jakes Ministries. In September, DeMoss flew to Boston for a private meeting with Romney. He wasn't looking for a new client—at least not a paying one. "I told him that it was wrong to think that evangelical voters would dismiss him out of hand just because he's a Mormon," says DeMoss. "I offered to help for free."

It was an offer that Romney could not refuse. As the field of 2008 presidential candidates comes into sharper focus, the matter of Romney's faith is becoming one of the nation's most pressing political questions: Will American voters accept the notion of a Mormon president? Or more precisely, will evangelical voters, who hold so much sway in Republican primaries, accept Romney, whose religion is regarded by many of them as a weird cult?

The problem is that nobody knows the answer with any certainty. Most pundits offer only shrugs. Those who hazard guesses tend to draw from a well of anecdotes and a couple of polls; liberals among them are also influenced by the suspicion that GOP primary voters are a bunch of bigots who would love to find another group to exclude. The Romney camp would like to ease anxieties as quickly as possible—and so it has kick-started an aggressive effort to court Christian conservatives. The success of this strategy may determine whether Romney becomes a minor footnote in the history of presidential politics, or something more.

When DeMoss returned to Atlanta after his first meeting with Romney, he knew what he needed to do next: arrange another get-together, but this time with a group of influential Christian leaders. He assembled a list of top evangelicals and issued invitations. "I sent them by FedEx because the time frame was so short," says DeMoss. About a dozen accepted and traveled at their own expense to Boston, gathering at Romney's home in Belmont, Mass., on October 26. The attendees included Gary Bauer, Franklin Graham, Jerry Falwell, and the pastors from several evangelical mega-churches, such as Paula White of Without Walls International Church, based in Tampa. "We sat in a circle, eating cold cuts from trays in our laps and talking for almost three hours," says one of the

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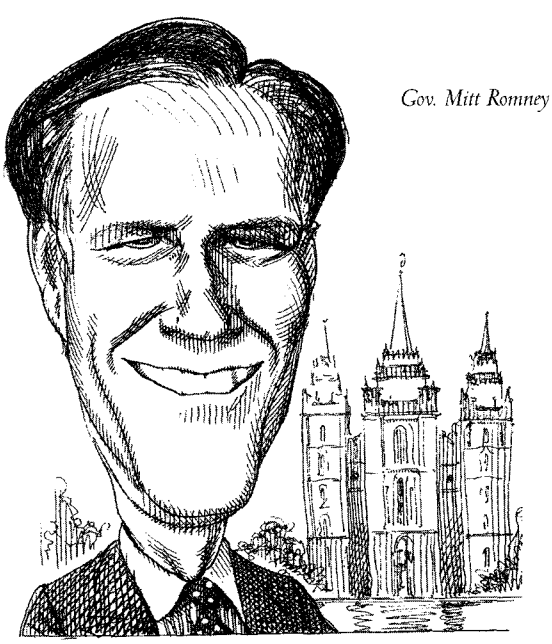
participants. "I think every one of us came away impressed."

Richard Land certainly did. "Our discussion was open and frank," says Land, who heads the policy arm of the Southern Baptist Convention. "Evangelicals know that they're not electing a theologian-in-chief, but a commander-in-chief. If they agree with Romney on social issues, his Mormonism won't be a hindrance, especially if he's the only viable social conservative in the mix." Frank Page, the president of the Southern Baptists and the pastor of a large church in Taylors, S.C., did not attend the Belmont meeting but echoes Land's sentiments: "I have a deep disagreement with Romney's theology, but I won't rule him out. Among the presidential candidates who have surfaced, he's the closest to the Southern Baptists in his social and moral beliefs."

Most of the discussion at Romney's home focused on policy issues, such as the governor's history of fighting for traditional marriage and against destructive embryonic-stem-cell research. The question of his faith did come up, however, because Romney himself raised it. He described it in terms similar to those he used during an interview that aired in November on *The 700 Club*, the news program hosted by Pat Robertson on the Christian Broadcasting Network. Here's what Romney said on Robertson's program: "I think Americans want people of faith to lead their country. Generally they don't care so much about the particular brand of faith if the people that they're looking at have the same values they have. And people of my faith have the values of other great religions that are represented here in this country."

If anything, Mormons are *more* conservative than people of other faiths. In 2004, no state gave a greater share of its popular vote to President Bush than Utah, where about three-quarters of the electorate is Mormon. They are quintessential values voters whose views on social matters are virtually indistinguishable from those of evangelicals.

On spiritual matters, of course, there are deep differences. Mormons obviously count themselves as Christians, but most evangelicals disagree. They're appalled at the concept of extra-Biblical revelation, which is what the Book of Mormon claims to contain. Mormons also hold unorthodox views on human nature and the divine Trinity. "If you can't sign on to the Nicene Creed—Catholics and Protestants do, but Mormons don't—then you're outside the boundaries of traditional Christianity," says Joseph Loconte, an evangelical who is a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.



Gov. Mitt Romney

ROMAN GENN

Then there's that awkward business about polygamy. Although the Mormon Church essentially banned it a century ago, it's the single trait that many Americans associate with Mormonism. When Romney speaks to new audiences, he tries to put them at ease with a joke: "I believe marriage should be between a man and a woman . . . and a woman . . . and a woman . . ." It may help that several of his potential GOP competitors, such as Rudy Giuliani and John McCain, have divorced and remarried; Romney has been married to the same woman—his first and only wife—since 1969.

"There's no question that there are strong feelings about Mormonism," says Jerry Falwell, the founder of Moral Majority. "But we're not electing a Sunday-school teacher, we're electing a president. I do not believe his church affiliation will hinder his being a viable candidate among evangelicals." Jay Sekulow of the American Center for Law and Justice, who also met Romney in October, agrees: "I don't think Mormonism will play as an issue. It isn't a disqualifier. We're past that. I'm practical, and I'm impressed with him on the things that really matter."

Richard Lee of First Redeemer Church, near Atlanta, felt a connection to Romney in Belmont as well: "Before meeting him, I didn't know the fortitude of his moral beliefs, and I found a kindred spirit on the sanctity of human life and traditional marriage." Franklin Graham, the son of Billy, told Romney that he "didn't have a problem" with the governor's Mormonism and proceeded to ask several questions about international issues. "I enjoyed the opportunity to attend a meeting with Mitt Romney and his wife Ann in their home, and I appreciate his strong stand on issues which I consider to be important," said Graham in a statement to NR. "I believe every voter who claims to follow Jesus Christ ought to judge a candidate on where he or she stands on issues that are important to people of faith."

THE EVANGELICAL PRIMARY

If Romney isn't racking up formal endorsements from prominent evangelicals, it's partly because several of these figures say that they won't make public endorsements of anybody. Yet many evangelicals are willing to say that Romney's Mormonism isn't a deal-breaker. "He's a very attractive and viable candidate," says Chuck Colson of Prison Fellowship. "As an evangelical, I'm not troubled that he's a Mormon. I would have theological concerns about his soul, but not about his competence. I'm looking for someone who shares my values and is capable of governing."

A web-based group called Evangelicals for Mitt tries to reinforce this point. "I'm convinced that evangelicals are going to realize that he's the best man for the job," says David French, who runs the site with his wife and several colleagues. "We don't elect a president to tell us about the nature of Jesus, but to advance certain political and moral issues." French has visited South Carolina, an early-primary state, to meet privately with church leaders. He also says that his group receives no financial support from Romney's political-action committee or from Mormons: "I know all the donors and they're evangelicals."

In interviews about Romney, Colson and several other evangeli-

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cals cited Martin Luther, the father of the Protestant Reformation, who is credited with saying that he would rather be "ruled by a wise Turk than a foolish Christian." Marvin Olasky, the editor of *World* magazine, adds that a "wise Mormon" is an acceptable option. "I know nothing about Romney that would preclude me from voting for him," he says. "If he faces Hillary Clinton, I'll vote for him in a Utah minute."

The good news for Romney is that evangelicals have a long history of rejecting their coreligionists. "I'm used to voting against Southern Baptists," says a leader in that flock. "Carter, Clinton, Gore—I voted against them all." Even within the politics of Republican primaries, evangelicals seem more concerned about finding conservatives who can win general elections than politicians who are theologically pure. The stumbling presidential candidacies of Bauer and Robertson suggest as much. "People will be practical, and they will make judgments based on the alternatives," says Richard John Neuhaus, a Catholic intellectual who is widely respected by Protestants. "From what I've seen of Romney, I'm very favorably impressed—he's done well within the eccentric politics of Massachusetts. For me, his Mormonism is not a positive factor, but I could support him."

Yet it would be wrong to suggest that Romney is on the verge of wrapping up the evangelical vote. "I don't believe that conservative Christians will vote for a Mormon, but that remains to be seen, I guess," said James Dobson, the head of Focus on the Family and possibly the most influential evangelical in the country, on Laura Ingraham's radio program in October. Dobson was not available for an interview with NR. His top policy adviser, Tom Minnery, refused to say whether Romney's faith would preclude Dobson or himself from supporting the governor's presidential bid: "I'm not going to answer that now."

AN UPHILL FIGHT

In a *Los Angeles Times*/Bloomberg poll conducted in June, many people were willing to answer the question—and not in a way favorable to Romney. The survey asked: "Just thinking about a candidate's religion, do you think you could vote for a Mormon candidate for president, or not?" Thirty-seven percent said no, compared with 10 percent for a Catholic, 15 percent for a Jew, 21 percent for an evangelical, and 54 percent for a Muslim. Two distinct groups demonstrated a special reluctance to support a Mormon: those who attend church frequently and Democrats. Among adults who go to church weekly, 41 percent said that they couldn't vote for a Mormon. Among those who go more than once a week—a group that includes many evangelicals—50 percent said that they couldn't. Forty-two percent of Democrats said that they wouldn't vote for a Mormon, compared with about one-third of both Republicans and independents.

These figures may be inflated because the poll asked respondents to focus narrowly on religion. (A 1999 Gallup survey suggested that a much smaller portion of Americans—17 percent—would refuse to vote for a well-qualified candidate of their own party who was also a Mormon.) Romney obviously hopes that a growing number of Americans accept the view of Cal Thomas, a popular journalist and an evangelical. "If an ambulance hits me, I care less where or how the driver worships than I do about his sense of direction to the nearest hospital," he wrote in July, responding to the L.A. *Times*/Bloomberg poll. "It troubles me not that a Mormon might be president. It does trouble me a great deal that so many people would think a person's faith . . . should be the only reason to deny someone the presidency."

Many evangelical voters may ultimately decide that they don't have anywhere else to go but Romney. McCain and Giuliani have their own problems with evangelicals—McCain because he is perceived by many as contemptuous, and Giuliani because he has a history of espousing Manhattan-style social liberalism. Two of Romney's biggest threats may come from Sen. Sam Brownback of Kansas and Gov. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas, potential candidates who have little chance of winning the GOP nomination but who have loyal followings among evangelical activists. Either could peel votes away from Romney.

Romney has another potential weakness. "He talks about core values that other Republicans won't touch, which is great, but I'm troubled by his changing views on abortion," says Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council, which has involved Romney in a couple of its events this fall. When Romney lost a race for the Senate against Ted Kennedy in 1994, he was a pro-choice candidate; when he won election as governor in 2002, he promised not to meddle with the state's abortion laws. Today, he insists that he's pro-life, but not everybody's buying it. "I don't think evangelicals should have a particular concern because of Mormonism," says Michael Farris, a home-school activist and the founder of Patrick Henry College. "But where has he been on pro-family issues over the years? I want to see candidates with arrows in their backs. I'm not looking for an Olympic-year conservative." Other evangelicals believe in the power of conversion. "As governor of California, Ronald Reagan signed a liberal abortion law and later regretted it," says Richard Land. "If he can change, then so can Romney. I do accept that Romney has changed."

The question of Romney's Mormonism won't ever disappear entirely, and Romney's camp may choose to address it in a speech or a high-profile TV interview—a tactic that would update John F. Kennedy's 1960 address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, when the candidate who became America's first Catholic president said, "I do not speak for my church on public matters—and the church does not speak for me."

The Mormon issue is likely to surface in ugly ways. Four years ago, former Republican congressman Matt Salmon found himself in a tight race for governor of Arizona. During the campaign's final days, an independent candidate ran ads claiming that Salmon, a Mormon, would not crack down on polygamist fringe groups. Salmon lost the election by a hair. Romney experienced similar demagoguery during his 1994 Senate race, when Sen. Kennedy suggested that Mormonism was fundamentally racist because blacks were excluded from its priesthood until 1978. The ploy backfired, but it may be tried again: At a South Carolina Republican executive meeting in September, Cyndi Mosteller, the McCain-supporting GOP chairwoman of Charleston County, bombarded Romney with questions about blacks and polygamy.

This spring, Regnery will publish *A Mormon in the White House?*, a book by radio host Hugh Hewitt, who is popular among evangelicals. "I can vote for any Republican, including Romney, who is committed to victory in the war and sound judges," he says. Hewitt won't reveal how he answers the question posed in the title, except to say, "It's going to take a whole book to figure it out." A book—and a couple of years. **NR**

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the long view

ROB LONG

Transcript from the al-Jazeera political talk show *The al-Irshad Group*

NOVEMBER 30, 2006

AL-IRSHAD: "Issue One! The American midterm elections! Republicans out! Democrats in! What does this mean for the future of the American war against Islam? I ask you, Most Exalted Imam Qu'Turush."

QU'TURUSH: "Honestly, two things. One, that the Bush administration simply lost sight of its main objective, which was to maintain a certain level of domestic popularity with tax cuts and small-bore initiatives in order to pursue its plans in Iraq and the Middle East in general. It was a political miscalculation."

AL-IRSHAD: "Interesting. Salil Faqtb, Islamic Revolutionary Party strategist?"

FAQTB: "As usual, Imam Qu'Turush has a great grasp on the conventional wisdom. Look, what happened in the United States a few weeks ago wasn't politics and it certainly wasn't anything the Bush administration did or did not do. It was the work of Allah, plain and simple, and the natural outcome of the lessons of His Prophet, Mohammed, peace and blessings be upon him."

QU'TURUSH: "I agree, but—"

FAQTB: "It's just silly to say—"

QU'TURUSH: "But—can I finish?—but—"

FAQTB: ". . . liberal nonsense about . . . "

QU'TURUSH: "Do not interrupt me, dog!"

FAQTB: "Son of a whore, this is all paleo-liberalism."

AL-IRSHAD: "Issue Two: Pull Out, Draw Down, or Suit Up? The recent midterm elections in the Satanic States of America have seen the ascension of a female person of female sex attributes rise to the level of Speaker of the House, a very high position in Satan's legislative body. Question: What does this say for the future of the Grand Battle? Fatima Kourizad, columnist for the *Yemen Mountain Daily News*."

KOURIZAD: "Mmmmgrmmpppp. Smthd grp brrmmm prpp."

AL-IRSHAD: "Can't understand you through the face veil. Too muffled, once again."

KOURIZAD: "Brrrrhgrrt ghhrrt hmmmmsh prrvvgher!"

AL-IRSHAD: "Still nothing. Ali Ba'Nasri, commentator on al-Jazeera's *Hardball*, thoughts?"

BA'NASRI: "In the first place, this just shows the total and complete feminization of the Satanic States of America. To be lectured by a female—slathered in rouge, lipstick, oozing sexual liberty and promiscuity—this is nothing less than the total unmanning of the American political system. We should strike them now! Now while their leader capers and prances in her robes for the delight of the men in the caravansary!"

QU'TURUSH: "Oh please. In the West, it occurs often that a woman rises to a position of power—"

FAQTB: "And you like that, don't you, Qu'Turush?"

QU'TURUSH: "No, no I don't, but it's wrong to suggest that it shows some new weakness on the part of—"

FAQTB: "Wrong. Wrong. You know, as weird as it sounds, I agree with Ali Ba'Nasri—"

AL-IRSHAD: "There's a first!"

FAQTB: "We need to strike them now, with our hundredfold strength!"

QU'TURUSH: "More insanity from the extreme right. This is madness."

FAQTB: "You're just parroting the same liberal nonsense you always parrot: We should wait until we develop the bomb before we destroy the infidel, we should wait until the time is right to incinerate its cities, we should wait until the Americans leave Iraq before launching our reign of terror and vengeance, we should wait, wait, wait. What are you, some kind of lefty liberal sissy?"

QU'TURUSH: "All I'm saying is that it makes more sense to continue the struggle in Iraq—"

BA'NASRI: "Continue the struggle? The Americans are killing us in Iraq! Hello? Earth to Qu'Turush! As each day passes, the Americans get closer and closer to stabilizing that country."

QU'TURUSH: "What? It's quite the opposite."

FAQTB: "Your problem is, like all liberals, you believe what you read in the *New York Times*."

KOURIZAD: "Grfftt lunghrt brm."

AL-IRSHAD: "Exit question: On a scale of one to ten, one being inconceivable and ten being metaphysical certitude, what are the chances that the new leadership of the Great Satan will change the policies of the madman in the White House and pull out of Iraq? Ali Ba'Nasri?"

BA'NASRI: "I'd say nine. These are essentially cowards and homosexuals and women and prostitutes. But they're realists. They'll cave and eventually convert to the One Faith."

AL-IRSHAD: "Salil Faqtb?"

FAQTB: "Not a nine, but let me say a high seven. Women are changeable and unreliable. We must factor that in."

AL-IRSHAD: "Interesting. Fatima Kourizad?"

KOURIZAD: "Jdrst snddfrg plmkr."

AL-IRSHAD: "Not sure why I bothered to ask. Last word, Qu'Turush?"

QU'TURUSH: "It's a stupid question. I'll say a five. American politics are mostly ruled by domestic concerns. If the new leadership starts off by raising taxes and allowing homosexuals to marry, then they'll lose their power and Satan Bush will reap the benefit."

AL-IRSHAD: "The answer is, zero! The new Democratic party leadership of the Great Satan will not be able to change the policy in Iraq because the Jews who control America will not let them! Bye bye!"

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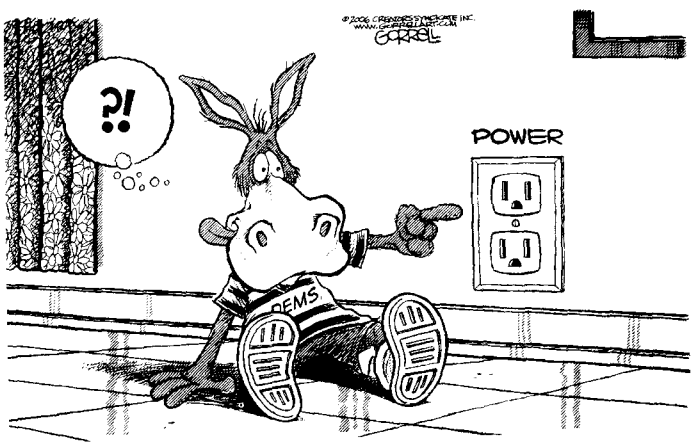
HELP!!!!

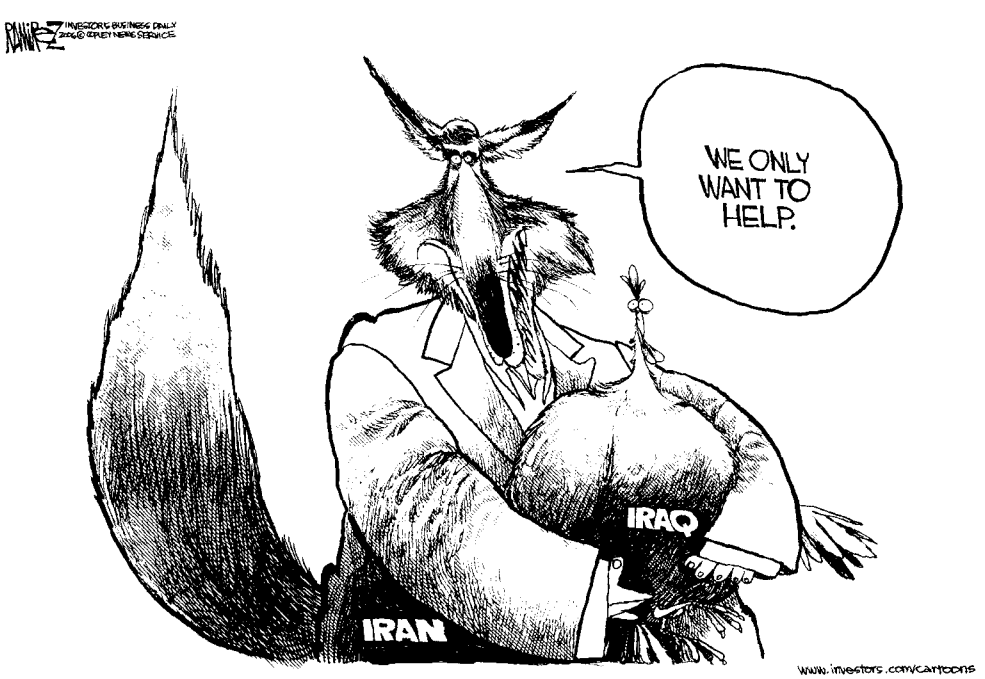
Rangel's Theme

He's calling for the draft again
As if the Army, seeking men,
Employed impressment gangs the way
Brits did in mad King George's day.
The Era of Good Feeling was
Already stressed; now Rangel does
What makes Pelosi's liner run.
It's—how to put it?—lotsa fun.

—W. H. von Dreele

"Look, buddy—if you don't like taxes and regulation, why don't you go live in Russia?"





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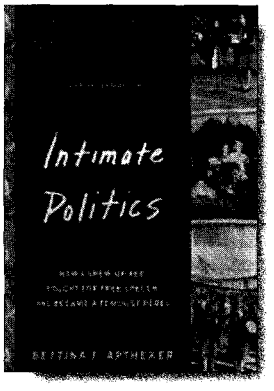
Child of the Revolution



Intimate Politics: How I Grew Up Red, Fought for Free Speech, and Became a Feminist Rebel, by Bettina F. Aptheker (Seal, 560 pp., $16.95)

PETER COLLIER

BETTINA APTHEKER claims in her new memoir that Pablo Neruda once called her "good looking and intelligent." This was a comradely gesture on his part. I remember her during Berkeley's Free Speech Movement of 1964 as a slight and somewhat boyish figure radiating serious body anxiety as she tried to emulate the charismatic audacity of Mario Savio and the other leaders. In the years to come, she and her old friend Angela Davis would become the most celebrated Communists of the new generation. But at this point she was merely a curiosity: The daughter of Communist historian Herbert Aptheker and herself an admitted member of the party, she sometimes appeared surprised to be playing a major role in a New Left movement that believed (in theory, at least) that Communists were politically so obsolete that they should be stuffed and put on display in the Smithsonian.

Back then, Bettina would no doubt have scorned as bourgeois individualism the credo discovered later on in the 1960s that "the personal is political." The opening anecdote of *Intimate Politics*, a trip log of her years on the Communist and now the lesbian left, shows how far she has come. It is 1995, and as she is working one afternoon on the beginnings of this book she is suddenly stricken by the smothering despair that has dogged her for years. Her longtime lover, Kate, is away in Europe. In a panic, Bettina drives to the beach near their Santa Cruz home. She thinks perhaps to end it all by walking into the water. But then "a voice" breaks through her hysteria. It does not say, as it might have, that Virginia Woolf has been there and done that. Rather it commands her to return home for further instructions. She obeys. Sobbing, she runs into the meditation room she and Kate have established and falls down in front of the statue of Tara, Tibetan goddess of compassion, who seems to give this message: "Call for help." She obeys again. While waiting for a friend to arrive, Bettina suddenly gasps: "My father!" Then comes a news flash from her deep unconscious: From when she was three until she turned 13, her father, indispensable man of the CPUSA, had forced her to play "choo choo," a game in which he would grab her from behind and chug in place until he arrived at the station with a shudder that left a sticky spot on her clothes and tears on his cheeks as he begged her never to tell anyone what he had done.

And she never did, not for over 40 years. But now, she uses this experience as the fulcrum for a life story she hopes will help others who "have struggled to come into their own sense of being . . . purpose and meaning," and prove that "healing is possible."

This clunky didacticism hangs over the rest of the book like an airborne toxic event. Embracing her abuse and its subsequent discontents with the same urgency with which she once embraced the labor theory of value, Aptheker sets out solemnly to map "the private gulag" in which she grew up, a cerebral prison defined not only by Herbert Herbert's incestuous pedophilia, but even more by a gender confusion leading to half a lifetime of numbed heterosexuality and unrequited Sapphic longings.

A few red-diaper memoirs—David Horowitz's *Radical Son* and Ronald Radosh's *Commies* come immediately to mind—unflinchingly describe the psychic and intellectual disjunctions of growing up in small Soviet outposts on our native soil. We are in their debt for revealing the treacherous banality of this subculture. But aside from her father's episodic desire to play The Little Engine That Could, Bettina doesn't find too much wrong with a childhood spent toting around placards and attending rallies "to effect change in the world." Her mother, Herbert's first cousin and an even stronger Communist, is something of a pain, nickel and diming the family's black housekeeper while her husband is in his study writing books on black liberation. But when Bettina notes this and other such details it is less to gain honest traction on her past than to establish her own moral superiority in precociously rejecting such hypocrisy.

The trial and execution of the Rosenbergs is a "political nightmare" which makes her fear that her family is next (but it is not so traumatically memorable that it keeps her from misnaming one of the sainted Meeropol orphans as "Ray"). The FBI men who shadow the Aptheker are menacing outriders of the American Inquisition, but they don't prevent the family from enjoying working holidays abroad with French Communist-party leader Jacques Duclos and the rest of the boys. Soviet "aggression" is always in quotation marks.

Occasionally a tepid revisionism asserts itself. Finishing her account of her 15 minutes of fame in the Free Speech Movement, for instance, Bettina engages in one of the disingenuous self-inventories that appear periodically throughout the book. "While I was heralded as a leader of Berkeley's free speech movement, I simultaneously justified the Communist suppression of freedom of speech and freedom of the press in the Soviet Union, East Germany, Hungary, and elsewhere." But wait—the devil made her do it: "I attribute this imprinting to the way I survived my childhood, the sexual abuse in particular; I dissociated from myself and merged with my father, making us one, indivisible."

Bettina left the party even before it left us. She actually uses "Stalinism" every

Mr. Collier's most recent book is *Medal of Honor: Portraits of Valor Beyond the Call of Duty*.

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now and then as a noun of mild reproach (and notes enthusiastically that she was one of three out of 120 National Committee members to vote against supporting the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia), but her view of her social history is basically unreconstructed. In 1969, for instance, she took a European trip with her husband, Jack Kurzweil, also a Berkeley Communist, to condemn the U.S. at a Helsinki World Congress of Women and then at an East German youth festival. Looking back at the experience, she is still surprised by the fact that the comrades there didn't get it about America: "The group thought Jack and I were exaggerating when we spoke of racism, poverty, and police brutality in the U.S." And in recalling being shown the archives of the anti-Nazi group White Rose in East Berlin, she remarks: "It was easy to see parallels to our own activity in the United States in opposition to the war in Vietnam." The absence of a subordinate clause—"except that the members of White Rose were executed while we far less courageous opponents of the war in Vietnam were glorified as youthful idealists"—says it all.

If the politics part of *Intimate Politics* involves rebottling Old Left clichés as "progressivism," the intimate part is a chronicle of victimhood and recovery. There is no lack of moist prose. ("In winter the young saplings are completely covered, smothered in snow. Only the heartiest survive. I was the young sapling in emotional hibernation, spaced out, waiting for a spring thaw I didn't know would come.") There are excursions into what critic Lee Siegel calls "calamity writing"—mentions of self-mutilation and suicidal yearnings and of "channeling rage and grief." But they usually end in politically correct homilies about "the politics of trauma." Always heading toward the light of feminism, this inner life seems to move in accordance with Hegelian laws.

The beginning of what Bettina sees as her liberation appears to have come with the 1972 trial of Angela Davis, whom she had known since childhood when they both attended meetings of a Communist youth organization in the Apthekers' basement. Davis was charged with supplying guns to Jonathan Jackson for what became a bloody 1970 shootout at the Marin County courthouse in an effort to free Jackson's brother George, who was "assassinated" during a prison breakout attempt the following year. Bettina organized Angela Davis's defense.

Bettina re-runs the movement's streaky newsreel on the events connected with the Davis trial. Jonathan was righteously enraged that his brother had been imprisoned for ten years for a $70 robbery. (But George—a psychopathic, if charming, thug—had organized a prison gang called the Wolf Pack, ran prison gambling operations, and boasted to New Left admirers of having killed twelve men during those unfair years in the slammer.) And of course Davis herself was just the blameless victim of America's anti-Communist crusade made more poisonous by the addition of race. (But the shotgun Jonathan Jackson used to blow off the head of a judge in the Marin County Götterdämmerung had been purchased by Angela two days earlier.)

Bettina's involvement in these New Left apocalyptics put her at odds with the party. While she was romanticizing Jonathan Jackson's action as the moral equivalent of the antebellum slave rebellions her father had made his reputation writing about, CPUSA chairman Henry Winston was criticizing the events on the West Coast as a form of adventurism that jeopardized the party. Bettina's heretical insistence on her position eventually caused her to be removed from the Central Committee (with her father's meaching acquiescence) and to be ignominiously disinvited from the victory celebration the party opportunistically staged once Davis was finally acquitted.

Feeling increasingly adrift but unable to cut the cord, she found work in the late 1970s as an instructor at San Jose State College and the University of California at Santa Cruz. Attracted to the women's movement and even more to women, she began slip-sliding into the Me Decade. She decided to get divorced ("Jack was very progressive and very accepting") and went on a fitness jag that made her "a new woman with a new body, entering a new life." She read Adrienne Rich. She went camping. She entered a long-term relationship with Kate Miller ("our first date was set for Wednesday, November 7, the anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution") with whom sex was, for the first time in her life, "beautiful and tender." She embraced Buddhism. It was what Californians call a harmonic convergence.

In 1978, she wrote a book called *Women's Legacy* for International Press, the Communists' publisher. It was supposed to fuse "Marxism and feminism into a unified theory of oppression and liberation." But Bettina's burgeoning "feminist consciousness" conflicted with the party's view of the women's movement as "a petit bourgeois formation." Doctrine held that workers were exploited at the point of production—but what about in the bedroom and the kitchen? And how could party ideologues dismiss issues like rape and abortion as "merely personal"?

After a long ideological wrangle, CP censors finally rejected *Women's Legacy* as irreparably deviationist and Bettina finally said that she was out of there. Her father's response to her resignation from the party is classic: "The Soviet Comrades will never understand it! Never!" But otherwise, the moment is anti-climactic. Bettina does not feel compelled to produce a moral balance sheet, let along a profit and loss statement, of all the years she belonged to a religion of losers. But then her God didn't really fail; it just didn't give her enough space. The closest she comes to indicating her final views on Communism comes in her later nonplussed reaction to the fall of the Wall. The comrades' major problem, she says, was that they failed to recognize that "you can't legislate altruism." This is a statement that ranks right up there with "What we have here is a failure to communicate."

If her inconclusive apostasy causes no dark night of the soul for Bettina, it is because there is actually no discontinuity in her life, feminism having become for her Communism by other means. Already a part-time instructor at UC-Santa Cruz, she decides to get a Ph.D. in the History of Consciousness program. Widely regarded as the graduate-school equivalent of dumbbell English (another Sixties figure who got this degree in the '70s was "Doctor" Huey P. Newton, as he referred to himself for the rest of his wretched life), "HistCon" was headed by historian Hayden White, who smoothed Bettina's way onto the tenure track by scooping up the book rejected by the Communist party and accepting it as her dissertation. She

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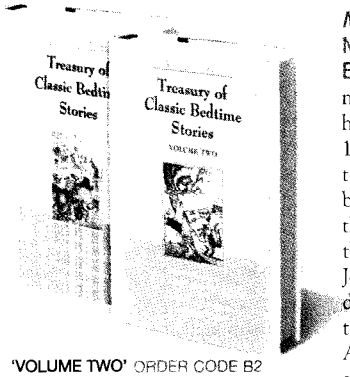

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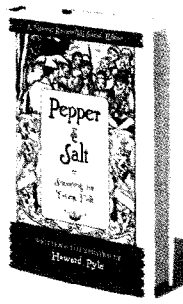

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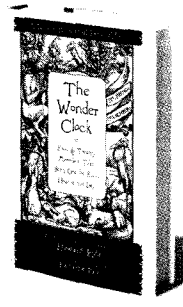

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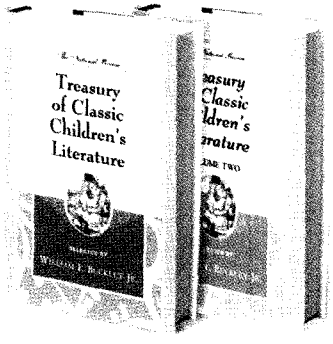

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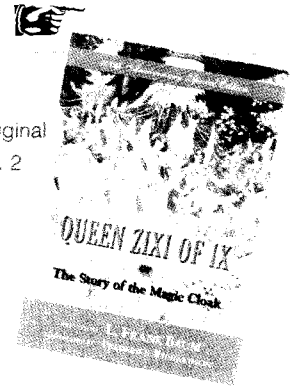

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soon became the star of the Women's Studies department, industriously shaping it to accord with "a feminist vision that was overtly political with a decidedly socialist bent."

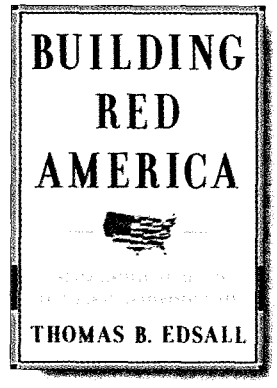
It was all good. She had found an erotic homeland. And once again she was in the political vanguard—this time of the new movement to replace education with indoctrination. But there was still the question of that choo-choo train.

In 1999, a few years after she became reconnected to her abused childhood, Bettina was out for a drive with her father. Then 80 years old, he was physically and intellectually frail; life had cut him down to size. As she tells it, he asked out of the blue, "Did I ever hurt you when you were a child?" It is the opening she has been waiting for: "You were sexually inappropriate with me." Initially disbelieving, Aptheker went through the possibilities when she pressed the details on him. Did I ejaculate? Yes. Did I penetrate? No. So agitated that he appeared to be on the edge of a vascular accident, he ended the discussion: "I can't live with this. . . . I have no memory of it! You must have dreamed it, or read about it somewhere! . . . Therefore, I deny it." It was supposed to be his last word on the matter. But over the remaining four years of his life, he couldn't keep from revisiting the accusation over and over again in conversations with Bettina, considering and rejecting the possibility that he might have done this thing.

These last few pages of the book have a bizarre allure—not so much because of the closure Bettina thinks she has finally gotten, but because the reader can't help but wonder, along with Aptheker himself, what really happened. A three-year-old might have repressed such a memory, but could a 13-year-old have sealed it off so completely in selective amnesia? (The statement buried in tiny type on the book's copyright page doesn't help answer this question: "The author has changed some names, places, and identifying details in this book . . .") Yet it is also true, of course, that in the Communist family secrets were survival and the unexamined life was not only worth living but a revolutionary duty.

In the end, the reader can agree with Bettina at least on one thing: "Memoir writing is a tricky business." **NR**

Red Like Us



Building Red America: The New Conservative Coalition and the Drive for Permanent Power, by Thomas B. Edsall (Basic, 320 pp., $26)

RAMESH PONNURU

An old joke has one German Jew asking another why he is reading *Der Stürmer*. He says that he reads it to feel better. Other newspapers tell him about pogroms, dispossession, and forced migration. The Nazi press tells him that he's running the world.

Conservatives may feel similarly about reading *Building Red America*. Republicans were thrashed in the elections, and conservatives both in and out of office have demonstrated both before and after those elections an impressive degree of political ineptitude. In Thomas B. Edsall's pages, however, conservative Republicans form a nearly unstoppable juggernaut. They are ruthless and single-minded, and enjoy both structural and tactical advantages that allow them to prosper even in the face of short-term defeats. If only it were so.

Republicans and Democrats are roughly equal in numbers. But Edsall believes that the class structure of the two parties creates two advantages for the Republicans. The first is that they draw disproportionately from the successful and are thus "more broadly skilled in economic combat," more competitive, and more aggressive. The second is that the Democrats are divided, with affluent social liberals providing most of the party's activists and money and working-class social moderates providing its votes. Edsall writes:

> It is the argument of this book that unless the Democratic party finds a way to defeat Republican "wedge issue" strategies; radically improves its organizational foundations; resolves its internal divisions on national security; formulates a compelling position on the use of force; addresses the schisms generated by its stands on moral, racial, and cultural issues; develops the capacity to turn Republican positions on social-cultural matters into a liability; devises an economic program capable of generating—and generating belief in—wealth; broadens its voter base; recruits candidates who sufficiently embody (or can be portrayed to embody) credible military leadership and mainstream populist values; develops a strategy to hold together a biracial, multiethnic coalition—or unless the population of the disadvantaged swells—the odds are that the Republican party will continue to maintain, over the long term, a thin but durable margin of victory.

Edsall is a justly respected political journalist. His liberalism does not create the normal political blinders: He does not project his views onto the electorate at large. He can see the sources of Republican strength. His analytical failure is different: His investment in Republican diabolism causes him to overrate or to exaggerate the distinctiveness of Republican strengths.

So, for example, Edsall makes the familiar claim that Republicans have followed "a strategy of purposeful polarization," splitting the electorate on moral and cultural questions. In a free society, politics will always involve division, and politicians will fight one another over where the line of division falls—with the goal of being on the larger side when the votes are counted. Republicans did not create the moral and cultural divisions in the electorate; they responded to them, just as Democrats did, but more successfully.

Edsall seems to believe that gerrymandering is some kind of Republican trick. "The classic Republican strategy," he writes, is to cram as many Democrats as possible into a few districts while creating many districts with small but solid Republican majorities. Democrats do the reverse where they can, however, because

Mr. Ponnuru, an NR senior editor, is the author of *The Party of Death*.

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that's the obvious way for a political party to gerrymander. And many of the Republican and Democratic gerrymanders cancel each other out. In few recent elections has either party's percentage of the House vote diverged greatly from its percentage of House seats.

Republicans have used the media as a wedge issue, Edsall writes. By discrediting the media as liberal, Republicans have reduced the power of harmful stories, and they have supposedly intimidated the media into running fewer such stories. The efficacy of this strategy of calling the media liberal has been enhanced immeasurably by the fact that it is true—as Edsall acknowledges. But if the press is liberal, and largely hostile to Republicans' ideas and values, then it requires no grand theory of Republican strategy to explain their bridling at the fact.

Some of Edsall's comments on polarization are simply baffling. "Substantial benefits flow to the majority party from intensely polarized politics and policies. First, legislation can be explicitly written to reward supporters and to penalize opponents. . . . While retaining rhetorical pretences—'I'm a uniter, not a divider'—policies of serving the general good can, within broad limits, be abandoned." Edsall offers several dubious examples of this kind of legislation. The ban on partial-birth abortion is one of them. A lot of people actually believe that this legislation serves the general good. If passing legislation that they favor constitutes "explicitly rewarding" them, then all legislation can be so described.

One novel point Edsall makes is that Republicans are more tolerant of risk than Democrats, and that this tolerance has influenced their political strategies and policy choices. At one level this is obvious: Republicans think that workers should take the risk of investing their own money, for example. But Edsall, plausibly, ties this tolerance to other types of risks that the Republicans have run. The attempt to reform Social Security was a roll of the dice: It could have transformed American politics, but instead it cost Bush his second-term momentum. The invasion of Iraq was another gamble. So, Edsall argues, was the strategy of dividing the electorate in the hope that Republicans would come out on top.

Even here, however, the two characteristic flaws of the book mar the analysis. It may be that a willingness to take political risks is a rational response by conservatives to circumstances. The modern administrative state creates powerful tendencies toward its further growth and consolidation; so attempts to pare it back may require shaking things up. And the thing about risk-takers is that sometimes they fail. Spectacular gambles sometimes go spectacularly bust. Which means that Republicans' "thin but durable" majorities may be more thin than durable. As we have just discovered. **NR**

PRAYER

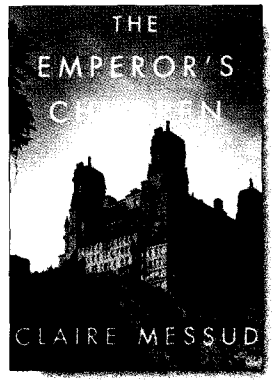
When we are invited to a banquet, we take what is set before us; and were one to call upon his host to set fish upon the table or sweet things, he would be deemed absurd. Yet we ask the Gods for what they do not give, though they have given us so many things.
—Epictetus

Thank you for the universe, the world,
for earth and water, fire and fresh air,
for sunlight and the night sky full of stars,
the million-petalled flower of being here,
for music that reflects time in its mirror,
silence, darkness, rest and sleep, and dreams,
wind and rain, forgetting and forgiveness,
the love that holds together all there is.

I might have wanted something else, of course,
but tell me how I could have asked for this.

—MICHAEL CREAGAN

Before the Fall



The Emperor's Children,
by Claire Messud
(Knopf, 448 pp., $25)

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

If it were non-fiction, Claire Messud's *The Emperor's Children* might have been titled *Brats: A Study in Pre-9/11 Liberal Narcissism*. I'm glad she wrote it as a novel, though, because neither sociopolitical analysis nor literary fiction—which this is—typically makes for such tense, compelling, cunningly plotted reading as Messud has accomplished here.

Her previous novels were of a certain high-toned, fancy-pants variety with "international" themes, so you wouldn't necessarily have expected this from her. But *The Emperor's Children* absolutely nails just the kind of people who most enjoy thinking of themselves as the type who read those other books.

The protagonists are a trio of 30-year-old Manhattanites, college friends who met at Brown and stayed close thereafter. Messud's theme is the feeling of entitlement shared by these spoiled children. They have very little of substance—not even much money—to justify their sense of superiority. This is a parable of the privileged, empty liberalism, wildly out

Mr. Klinghoffer is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute. His new book, *Shattered Tablets: Why We Ignore the Ten Commandments at Our Peril* (Doubleday), will be published in April.

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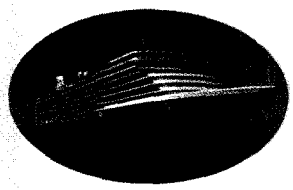

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Mon./July 30	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars
Tues./July 31	Glacier Bay	10:00AM	4:00PM	morning seminar late-night poolside smoker
Wed./Aug. 1	Juneau, AK	7:00AM	8:00PM	evening cocktail reception
Thur./Aug. 2	Sitka, AK	8:00AM	5:00PM	late-night poolside smoker
Fri./Aug. 3	Ketchikan, AK	7:00AM	1:00PM	afternoon seminars evening cocktail reception
Sat./Aug. 4	Victoria, B.C.	6:00PM	Midnight	morning seminar afternoon seminar
Sun./Aug. 5	Seattle	7:00AM		

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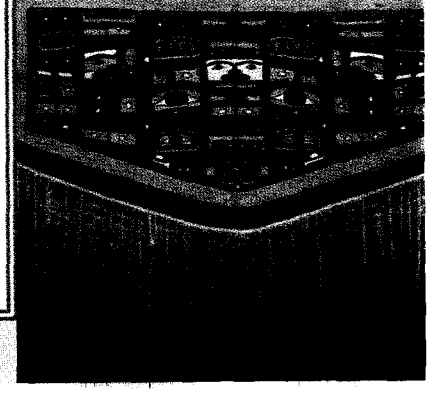

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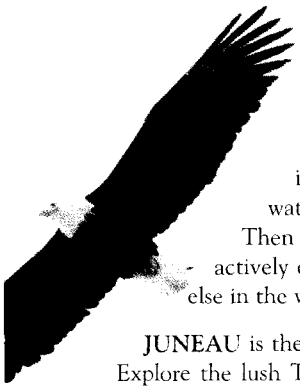

changing glacial landscape. You'll be awed: monumental chunks of ice split off glaciers, crashing into the sea, roaring like thunder, water shooting hundreds of feet into the air. Then it happens again! Glacier Bay has more actively calving tidewater glaciers than anyplace else in the world.

JUNEAU is the place to let your imagination run wild. Explore the lush Tongass National Forest. Visit the rustic shops in town. Or get out and kayak, dogsled, raft, whale watch, flightsee or fish. There's no end to the adventure because we're in port long enough to truly take advantage of the long daylight hours.

SITKA The onion domes of St. Michael's Cathedral are your first clue that Sitka was once a Russian settlement. Today, be greeted by Tlingit native people and astonishing marine life.

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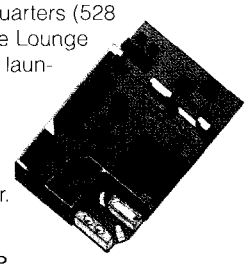
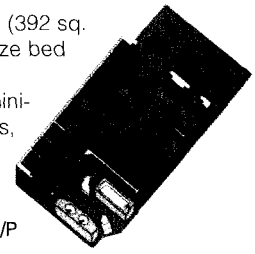


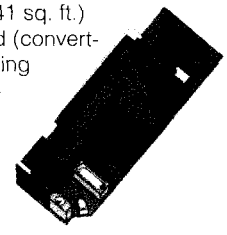
Category SA
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 5,479 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 9,799

SUPERIOR SUITE Grand stateroom (392 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), whirlpool bath/shower, large sitting area, DVD, mini-bar, refrigerator, floor-to-ceiling windows, and much more.



Category SS
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 4,299 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 7,499

DELUXE OUTSIDE Spacious cabin (241 sq. ft.) features private verandah, queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bath with shower, sitting area, mini-bar, tv, refrigerator, and floor-to-ceiling windows.



Categories VA / VB / VC
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 3,699 P/P
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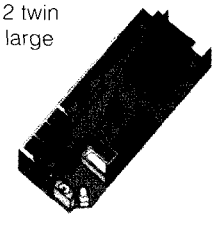
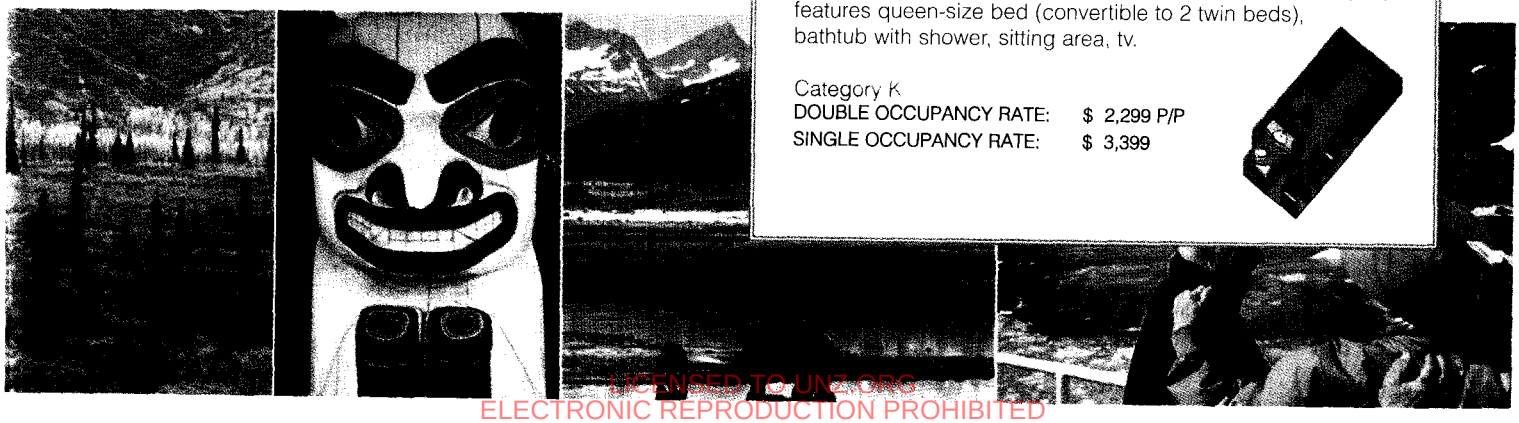
LARGE OCEAN VIEW Comfortable quarters (190 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bathtub with shower, sitting area, tv, large ocean-view windows.



Category D
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 2,999 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 4,199

LARGE INSIDE Cozy but ample cabin quarters (185 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), bathtub with shower, sitting area, tv.

Category K
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 2,299 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: $ 3,399



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of touch with the realities of evil in the world, that was supposed to have been blown apart with the World Trade Center.

The three pals are: Marina Thwaite, daughter of celebrated liberal journalist and egotistical blowhard Murray Thwaite. For years, beautiful, dim Marina has been trying to complete a book on the hermeneutics of children's clothing. Then there is Julius Clarke, a half-Asian gay would-be literary critic with a phony quasi-British accent. Finally, the least objectionable of the three, Danielle Minkoff is a not-quite-successful producer of high-minded public-television documentaries about things like the oppression of Australian aborigines and the perils of liposuction. In his or her own way, each is flailing and failing, not quite up to the rigors of an adult career. Not that any of the three friends entirely perceives this:

> It all came down to entitlement, and one's sense of it. Marina, feeling entitled, never really asked herself if she was good enough. Whereas he, Julius, asked himself repeatedly, answered always in the affirmative, and marveled at the wider world's apparent inability to see the light. He would have to show them—of this he was ever more decided, with a flamelike conviction. But he was already thirty, and the question was *how?*

Into their stable three-way friendship intrude three unpredictable forces. One: Frederick "Bootie" Tubb, Marina's 20-year-old college dropout and self-styled "genius" of a cousin from genuinely unprivileged Watertown, N.Y. Two: lizard-like Australian "revolutionary" Ludovic Seeley, preparing to start up a generously funded magazine of "radical cultural commentary." And three: the 9/11 terrorists, whom we don't meet but the impact of whose plotting erupts out of a gorgeous morning sky toward the end of the book.

Ludovic talks about revolution, but it's little more than an advertisement for himself. As Messud makes clear, there is really nothing for these children of privilege to rebel against. There are two kinds of spoiled children, after all, and which kind one is depends on what kind of parents were doing the spoiling. A parent who stands for something beyond himself can be rebelled against: Think of King David's handsome, perpetually indulged son Adonijah, who sought to take the throne of Israel for himself. But a parent who himself is just an empty shirt, like Murray Thwaite, presents nothing of substance to rebel against. This is the heartbreaking dilemma of today's campus leftists.

As the months count down to September, this literary novel becomes suspenseful to the point of being a page-turner.

Speaking of campuses, in selecting Brown as the place where Marina, Julius, and Danielle met, Messud has chosen shrewdly. As a graduate myself of this Ivy League exemplar, not of liberalism, exactly, but of the shallowest, most dim-witted liberalism-for-show-and-tell, I can vouch for her accuracy. The *Wall Street Journal*, too, is on the case: It recently reported on some of the many embarrassing examples of how Brown's admissions office pursued and admitted the children of celebrities, no matter how dumb, to impart a vapid flavor of glitter and prestige. Which sums up the attraction of being Left for some people who haven't given a thought to the philosophical issues that divide liberals from conservatives. Liberalism for them is simply the glittering, jet-set choice, associated with celebrity, but not necessarily with intellectual substance.

This politics of social privilege was most naturally at home in pre-9/11 America, and ought to have been wiped away by that horrendous crime. Basing beliefs on the prestige they confer on us was a luxury of the Clinton years, when nothing much—never mind the future of civilization—seemed to be at stake. But surely, no more. Or so you would have hoped. If only.

I should state, for the record, that Messud's own views on politics are not obvious. (Her husband, James Wood, is a senior editor at *The New Republic*.) But, when it comes to her portrait of Julius, she certainly is no sentimental celebrator of homosexual romance. His relationship with a stable-seeming, golf-playing young Jewish businessman ends violently in the grungy restroom of a gay dive bar with Julius cradling his own bleeding, mutilated cheek. The bite marks deeply incised in it belong to his boyfriend.

I can't say that I loved any of these characters. But that makes it all the more remarkable that Messud builds the kind of tension into her story that she does. These people don't deserve to have us care about them. Yet as the months count down from March 2001 to September, as Messud expertly sets all in place for the devastating climax, this literary novel becomes suspenseful to the point of being a page-turner. Because we know generally what's coming, the feeling of dread builds and builds, though we don't know which of these self-absorbed individuals will have his or her life utterly changed or ended on 9/11.

Messud eerily resurrects the unreality of that day. Danielle's high-rise apartment has a perfect view of the towers, so she's able to watch both in person and on television:

> [She] thought, at one point in the blur of it, that it was like witches, who couldn't be photographed—that had always been the belief, at any rate, in her childhood lore—by which you knew they were witches, and that by the same token what took place outside the window could have been credited as sorcery, some trick of the light, almost comical, so absurd, were it not for the fact that it was being filmed—the filming of it, the assurance of reality: the whole world was seeing this, and the Pentagon, too, and this was how you knew that it was really true.

This is a beautifully written novel, though perhaps not an encouraging one. The liberalism of vanity and self-love didn't end on 9/11 and it doesn't in Messud's depiction either. What her characters do learn is something different but still valuable, not political but personal. About that, I'll keep you in suspense. **NR**

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Silver Spoons

Great Expectations: The Troubled Lives of Political Families, by Noemie Emery (Wiley, 256 pp., $25.95)

MYRNA BLYTH

It is hard, very hard, to be the son of a successful and powerful father who is as ambitious for his children as he is for himself: That is the theme Noemie Emery traces through American history in her new book, *Great Expectations*. From the Adamses to the Bushes, in a series of short-story-like chapters, she describes the pressures and the pain, the demands and the disappointments experienced in dynastic families whose politics were different but whose desire for their children's success was very much the same.

Emery explains that she conceived the idea for this book "when it occurred to me that [the] death of Charles Adams in a Manhattan hovel in 1800 at age 29 of acute alcoholism was not unlike that in 1984 of David Kennedy at age 28 of a drug overdose in a motel in Palm Beach and might be related in curious ways." Her insight led her to a closer examination of these families, as well as the Roosevelts and the Gores, and to conclude that in American political history "there is no 'Kennedy curse.'" There is, rather, "a dynastic one that for 200-plus years has woven its way through the life of the country. It has produced presidents, statesmen, and slow-motion suicides."

The author makes many telling and insightful comparisons. For example, John and Abigail Adams might have been the first American parents who wanted to raise their son to be president—and this, before the office itself was invented. They had some success: John Quincy Adams, their firstborn boy, was the ideal "good son," intelligent, serious, and obedient. Emery notes that, in his desire to please his demanding parents and to make use of his intellectual gifts, he was not unlike a more recent "good son" of an ever-upwardly-striving couple: Al Gore. Gore's mother once said of the White House, "We raised him for it."

And while John Quincy coped, albeit unhappily, with the pressure to perform, much as Al Gore has done, Adams's two brothers and two of his own sons became alcoholics, three of whom died young. Their dissolute story was repeated not only in the lives of several of Robert Kennedy's sons but also in the shabby escapades of the sons of Franklin Roosevelt, for whom "greatness was out of the question and goodness not even attempted."

But what is most interesting in the book is Emery's description of the intense, emotional competition of brothers of great families, who wanted to outdo one another as much as uphold their father's honor. The best known of these was the fierce struggle for attention and applause between Joe Kennedy's two eldest sons, the superstar firstborn, Joe Jr., and his sickly, somewhat rebellious younger brother John. A less-examined competition—although so important to our current history—is that between the Bush boys, George, the older, a young rebel like JFK, and Jeb, the "good son" of that family, who was once regarded as the young Bush with the far greater potential. There is also the poignant rivalry between Ted Roosevelt Jr. and his more gifted cousin Franklin, both trying in their way to be the heir apparent to the dynamic Theodore Roosevelt.

Bitter opponents throughout their lives, Ted Roosevelt Jr., the Republican, and FDR, the Democrat, would finally make their peace on the battlefields of World War II. Though Ted believed FDR had stolen his political career, he had always really wanted to be a soldier, not a statesman, and to replicate his father's daring Rough Riders exploits. As a boy he had longed to go to West Point but was talked out of it by his determined father and sent to Harvard instead. During FDR's long presidency he remained reflexively hostile, even flirting with the isolationist America First movement, while President Roosevelt prepared the nation for war. But after Pearl Harbor Ted Jr., who had fought in World War I, asked to be put back on active duty.

On D-Day, he and his son Quentin were the only father and son to hit the beaches together. During the landing he was under enemy fire for hours, protecting his troops and organizing a counterattack while propping himself on a cane. (Gen. Omar Bradley would call this the

Myrna Blyth, author of *Spin Sisters: How the Women of the Media Sell Unhappiness—and Liberalism—to the Women of America*, is a contributor to National Review Online.

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bravest feat he had ever seen performed by an American soldier.) Ted Jr. died five weeks later of a heart attack. His son would write his mother: "It was like the magnificent climax of a great play." FDR, his longtime nemesis, the commander-in-chief he had finally chosen to serve, would die the following year.

Joe Jr. and Jack Kennedy might have had it even tougher. They not only had to satisfy their demanding father's ambition for them; they were called upon to burnish Joe Kennedy's tarnished reputation. As Emery writes, "Joe [Jr.] had to excel, to live up to the faith that his father had in him . . . Jack had . . . to equal his brother or outperform him . . . [Both] had to refute the idea that their father (and they) were lacking in courage." Jack, in the early years of the war, saved his shipmates when the PT boat he captained was destroyed; he came home to be toasted as a hero. "Joe smiled and drank with the others. Then he went upstairs and cried." Joe, a Navy pilot, was so eager for his own medal that he volunteered for a daring, reckless mission, on which he perished.

In the last third of the book Emery shrewdly analyzes today's dynastic winners and losers. She examines at considerable length the frustrations of Al Gore, the longings of Jeb Bush, and the difference in temperament and world view between Bush I and Bush II, differences that now have affected us all.

But what, you might ask, about the women of these families? Even though Emery comments early on that the sisters and daughters in these dynasties "have been shadow inheritors" with "their own patterns, although frequently hidden from view," I would like to know why Abigail Adams and Eleanor Roosevelt, such remarkable women, were such unremarkable mothers. I also would have wanted to learn more about the influence of such strong and feisty women as Barbara Bush (her son, the current president, has always said she is the parent he takes after) and Pauline Gore, a poor girl who waited tables in order to pay for law school, at a time few women went to college. Still, even though it fails to remember the ladies, *Great Expectations* is a thoughtful, sympathetic, and unique look at the all-too-human aspects of the most distinguished families of American history. **NR**

■ FILM ■

Tough Guy

ROSS DOUTHAT

THE first James Bond movie I saw was *The Living Daylights*, one of Timothy Dalton's two outings in the role, in which 007 foiled a nefarious arms dealer (is there any other kind?) and a rogue Russian general, helped rout the Soviets in Afghanistan, and romanced a beautiful cellist. The most memorable scene involved Bond and his lady friend using her case as a sled, riding it across the Swiss border to safety and shouting insouciantly: "Nothing to declare! Only a cello!" I was eight at the time, which is probably the perfect age to be introduced to a series that's always been a prepubescent boy's fantasy of what grown-up adventures are like—the gadgets and guns and the striking lack of gore, the *National Geographic*-meets-Tintin globetrotting, and the vision of sexual relations as little more than a series of really cool playdates.

Casino Royale, on the other hand, this autumn's attempt to kick-start the franchise by returning to its Ian Fleming roots, is meant to be something else entirely: Bond when he wasn't yet *Bond*, but just a handsome roughneck ill-at-ease in a tuxedo, by turns aggressive and vulnerable, capable of falling in love and even reconsidering his line of work. Bond for grown-ups, in other words—a man with a psychology and a history, a spy who sweats and bleeds and suffers, a hero who can't always save the damsel in distress.

This means stripping away most of the Bondian window dressing, the old familiars that have been associated with 007 since Sean Connery slipped into the tuxedo. This Bond's first car is a Ford (a rare product placement that amuses rather than appalls), not the expected Aston Martin; there's no Q and no gadgets; the stunts are unrealistic but not deliberately absurd. The villain is nefarious enough—a mournful swell named Le Chiffre (the Danish star Mads Mikkelsen), banker to the world's terrorists, who weeps blood from a damaged tear duct—but he's a smallish fish instead of a Goldfinger or a Blofeld, a middleman who spends half the

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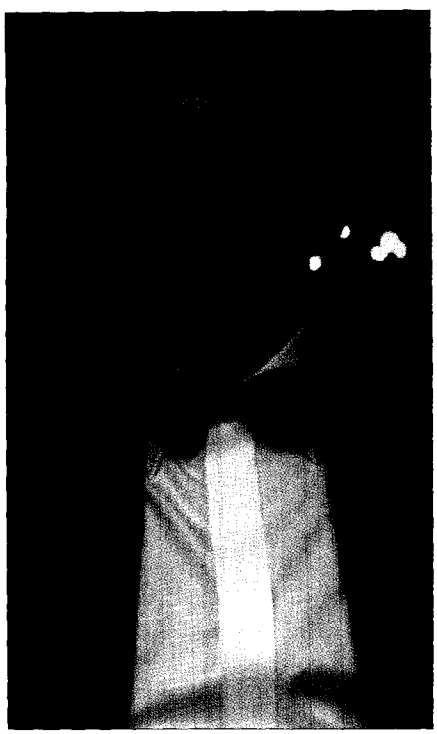
movie trying to keep the sharks from swallowing him up. There's an actual actress—a smoldering Eva Green, rescued from the pretensions of Bertolucci's *The Dreamers* and the wreck of Ridley Scott's *Kingdom of Heaven*—playing the first of all the Bond girls, and she goes by Vesper Lynd, which is ludicrous but only mildly so compared to Xenia Onatopp, say, or Pussy Galore. And there's even gentle mockery of the absent 007 conventions: "Shaken or stirred?" a barman asks this Bond, and he fires back: "Do you think I give a damn?"

None of this should work. Bond isn't a once-serious icon gone to camp and boyish fantasy—he *is* a fantasy, and always has been, however seriously Ian Fleming may have taken him at first. The critics who draw distinctions between the silliness of the Roger Moore era and the supposedly grittier Connery and Pierce Brosnan epochs are ultimately splitting hairs: The last Brosnan installment, the spectacularly bad *Die Another Day*, earned over $400 million worldwide because it embodied, rather than betrayed, the qualities that made the Bond brand so successful. (Go watch the first Bond film, *Dr. No*, again if you don't believe me—the franchise was absurd from the beginning.) Strip away the cars and secret weapons, the lazy quips and the supervillains, and there shouldn't be anything left to keep the thing afloat. Nobody buys tickets for a Bond movie expecting John le Carré or Graham Greene, and nobody wants to.



SONY PICTURES

The new Bond

And yet *Casino Royale* is brilliant entertainment even so, and most of the credit belongs to Daniel Craig, the latest 007, who is so good in the role that he seems poised to steal the character out from under not only Brosnan, but Connery as well. The ur-Bond is remembered fondly by critics because he managed to add a hint of menace to all the gentleman-spy silliness—a faint undercurrent of adulthood for viewers bored by Oddjob and SPECTRE. But Connery wasn't much of an actor, and so he achieved this effect mainly by slapping his female co-stars around a bit, in between the usual martinis and rolls in the hay (he bedded Pussy Galore in a barn, if memory serves).

Craig, on the other hand, actually feels *tough*, with a coiled brutality that makes Connery's hairy-chested macho routine look, well, kind of sissy. (It's hard to imagine Austin Powers as a satire of *this* Bond.) He's a "blunt object," as Judi Dench's M puts it approvingly, who kills with a mix of satisfaction and self-loathing, and without any throwaway one-liners to remind us that it's all in good fun. The movie is trapped between the usual Bondian fantasyland (far too many scenes look like they were shot for a travel brochure) and a harder, bloodier reality, but Craig is superb enough to make this balancing act an unexpected strength—he plays Bond as a man caught in the same middle ground as the film, torn between the superman he's becoming and the humanity he's about to leave behind. His romance with Green's Lynd feels like a last, desperate stab at normalcy: She's a ladder out of his own private emptiness, and he reaches for her the way Gatsby (a role that Craig was born for) reached for Daisy Fay, and with the same disastrous consequences.

Whether this balancing act is sustainable over a longer run of films is an open question. By the end of *Casino Royale*, Craig's Bond seems securely on a path toward becoming the caricature that my eight-year-old self adored; without the grit of an origin story to tether him to earth, I imagine that future installments will regress toward the mean, and dreck like *Die Another Day*. But for now, at least, we can savor this unexpected holiday pleasure—a rare Bond for all seasons. **NR**

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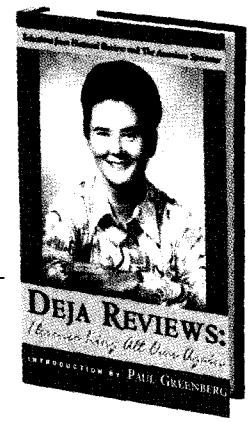

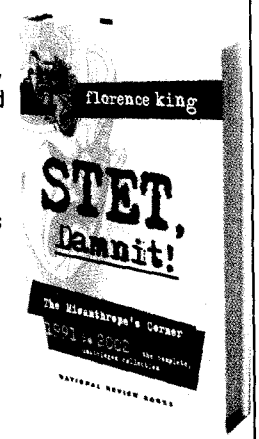

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■ CITY DESK ■

The Party

RICHARD BROOKHISER

THE end of autumn is the season of obligation—of Christmas parties, office parties, book parties for the holiday list, all perks of our specialness as city dwellers. Open bars greet us as we arrive, bags of trinkets accompany us as we leave. Yet we go to these festivities dutifully, like spoiled children complaining of our piano lessons, or our Ivy League course loads. Life is hard. It takes special effort to infuse these invitations with what even jaded New Yorkers will recognize as glamour.

The worthy institution, which recently celebrated a birthday here, did an excellent job. Worthy Institution had three things going for them as celebrants: They are from out of town, so no one is used to them; they don't celebrate every year, so no one is tired of them; and (thanks to reason number one), they did not do what every New York institution does, which is to book the grand ballroom of a midtown hotel, opting instead to reserve an evening at the best restaurant in town.

What restaurant is that? Is it the laboratory of the brilliant chef, pushing small portions and raw ingredients to the point where you will prepare your own meal of nothing? Is it the celebrity *boîte*, not yet open to the public, but which does take reservations by e-mail? Is it your neighborhood diner? A case could be made for all of them, but Worthy Institution's choice was the Best Restaurant of 1959. It is a temple of modernism, which means it is as remote as the Gay Nineties. The bar is dark wood, and glass-needle chandeliers, like icicles; the passageway displays a huge Picasso (Picasso as period décor—just the way to hang him); the dining room is a vast clean cube, all cool mute colors and right angles, tended by waiters in grey suits. The menu recalls the moment when classical French cuisine was just passé, and culinary pioneers were discovering America; the freshness of the landfall still lingers.

Worthy Institution planned to fill Best Restaurant by offering Big Deal. Big Deal is not the most powerful man in America—that, ex officio, is the president. Formally, thousands of men and women have more power than Big Deal, since he no longer holds office. But in fact Big Deal is the second most powerful American. Half the country believes he is the king over the water, the other half believes he is Satan's rent boy; either way, we cannot help but look at him. How powerful is he? Bono returns his phone calls.

The convergence of all three factors, finally, would bring the fourth factor: Us. How can a party succeed if We do not attend it?

We did a fine job. Over hors d'oeuvres and champagne I saw Lefty, whom I met in green rooms ten years ago. Lefty brags, which irritates people, yet since he brags only about things he has actually done, what fair-minded person can complain? I asked what he was doing, and he said, "I'm writing two books." There was also Biographer. I have written biographies in my time, but mine read liked Wanted posters next to his total recalls, half Schliemann, half Saint-Simon. I remembered an anecdote from his last: Two congressmen were working together on a bill, when one, in wrath and excitement, kicked the other. My recall delighted him. "Nobody picked that up!" Memo to Speaker Pelosi: Whack away, no one will notice. There was even Madame Journalist, whom I read every week for fifteen years. Who next? Tony Millionaire?

Best Restaurant did an even finer job. Liquor is everywhere the same, and so these days are hors d'oeuvres—Limoges boxes of this and that. But the sit-down meal was a welcome relief from the chicken/beef/fish of such functions. The appetizer made me laugh: mushroom risotto, served in green, yellow-striped pumpkins: nature's Limoges boxes, so much brighter than ours. I was sitting in Siberia, in a side room up a staircase from the main cube, but I had a perfect sight line. A man in a hairpiece complained about his seating, in the guise of commiserating over a friend who was even farther away from the main action than we were. Why bother? Only if I were Mrs. Big Deal would I expect to sit close to him.

Worthy Institution did itself proud. Though they had important warm-up speakers, leading to Big Deal, they held them to five minutes each, which is almost unheard of. There was a personal angle as well, since the Institution is named, not for its founder, but for his daughter, who died age 38. This added an unusual note of humanity and reality to the proceedings. It was a handsome tribute, but who would not exchange an ocean of good works for a child? We hope for heaven, but we love the earth we know.

Their choice was the Best Restaurant of 1959. It is a temple of modernism, which means it is as remote as the Gay Nineties.

The only one to let down the side was Big Deal. He is good looking, if you remember that politics is the Hollywood of the ugly, and he speaks fluently. He displayed, however, a tic that was new to me—a bullying wag of the forefinger. It undercut his words, which were full of data points and moderate middles. The data points were as copious and untraceable as a swarm of flies, and the moderate middles were all rhetorical tricks: "Some of us eat only bread and water, while others of us eat the children of the poor. But the American people want a better way." Yet, though the words were unpersuasive, they evinced an effort to persuade, which is almost as important. The finger flicked it all away: "You'll listen, and you'll like it," it said. So the evening batted 3 for 4—better than Ted Williams.

Big Deal's bodyguards kept us bottled up at the entrance of the passageway while he shook a few last hands. He was at it again by the coat check. I think Lefty caught him on the way out. **NR**

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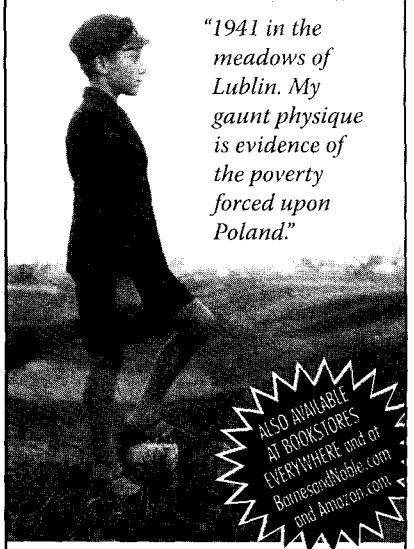

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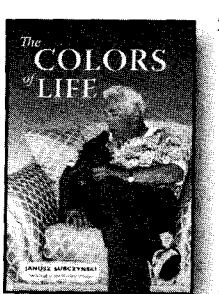

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Tuesday's Ultimatum

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 8

PARTISANS (both Democrats and Republicans) grieve especially, on Election Day Plus One, for individual legislators defeated, men and women, however few, who inspired confidence for whatever reason. Tenacity and right-mindedness, in the case of Rick Santorum. Geniality of intellect and an aura of idealism-in-hand, in the case of Jim Talent.

But on the big picture, what should one say, other than that if it hadn't happened, democratic governance would have been guilty of being asleep at the wheel?

Consider the event. A rejection of the policies of an incumbent president in Year Six is habitual. If it can happen to FDR and to Ike, it can happen to, well, anybody. President Bush gave over the last two days of the campaign to a single jibe: "They don't like ___? Ask them what *their* plan is."

And if the campaign was mostly about the Iraq War, he made a solid point. Is Nancy Pelosi the voice of the opposition in the House? If so, what exactly *is* her plan? She is against the war and was against it from the beginning, but what is she now to do, if the results of November 7 truly reflect national opposition to what we are trying to accomplish in Iraq?

The challenge posed by President Bush bounces back at him. What—the dissenters at the voting booths were entitled to ask—is *your* plan? If there is dissatisfaction, it is consummated by the replacement of the executive team. But these things do not happen in off-year elections.

It can hardly be doubted that if Mr. Bush had been up for reelection on Tuesday he would have been defeated. But inasmuch as he is still in office, what is reasonably expected? Mr. Bush has no "plan" other than a projection of the same plan that has failed. He can attempt to achieve success by more of the same, even if more of the same has given no evidence of a critical new life. If there is ahead of us a true departure from the program the administration has been following up to now, it must satisfy those whose rejection of existing policies was registered on November 7.

It is sobering to remind ourselves that the alternatives open to Congress come down finally to categorical action. When Congress decided to act on the unpopularity of the Vietnam War, it passed a series of resolutions and laws that prevented President Nixon from taking basic tactical steps to thwart the total defeat that lay ahead for us. If comparable laws were passed today, they would forbid American money to be used in Iraq for hostile purposes, which would be tantamount to forbidding armed resistance to the claims of the insurgents.

Merely to suggest such alternatives is to remind ourselves of the inherent inadvisability of contemplating them. The Constitution makes the president the commander in chief. To permit the continuance of his responsibility while stripping him of the means to act is a device for modifying the Constitution, for which critics would be reluctant to accept responsibility. If a crisis is of such a reach, then the orderly procedure is the impeachment of the president.

But the people who went to the polls on Tuesday intending to register opposition to the war are not of revolutionary mettle. Still, they have found the means to make demands that the president will need to appease.

The analysts added, to the Iraq dissent, the wells of dissatisfaction over other executive derelictions. We heard from the solid base of conservatives who identify good government with the Republican party. They spoke their opposition to a president who has not once used his constitutional power to resist spendthrift measures by Congress. He has not accosted directly, let alone relieved, the problems raised by helter-skelter immigration laws. And he simply gave up on reforming a Social Security system that cannot fulfill its commitments.

What this has meant is a dissociation from the normal allegiance a democratic republic feels for its duly elected leadership. And that dissociation was written by the voters' feet, making indelible marks on the sand.

The Inside Story

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 10

WE aren't supposed to make any generalities based on race, color, or creed, just to begin with. Invidious comparisons can be made, and indeed are every day made, by individuals. Still, institutions go to extraordinary lengths to avoid remarking differences. Indeed, many supercautious universities even forbid applicants to submit photographs, on the basis of which an official at the Department of Admissions might say—or whisper, or just *think quietly*—that this applicant is black/Indian/Chinese . . .

So what I want to know is: How is it that on page P-7 of the *New York Times* for November 9, I can find out how many people voted Democratic and how many Republican, nationwide, among: whites, blacks, Hispanics, Asians; men, women; 18 to 29–year–olds, 60 and older; didn't complete high school, did, some college, college graduate, postgraduate; Protestants, white Protestants, Catholics, white Catholics, Jews, white evangelicals; family income under $15,000, under $30,000, under $50,000, under $75,000, under $100,000, over $100,000; Easterners, Midwesterners, Southerners, Westerners; gays, lesbians, bisexuals.

Begin with truly sensitive questions, bearing on race, ethnicity, color.

What about Jewish voters? It is assumed, is it not, that cosmopolitan experience and education wipe out traditional tribal allegiances? Well, no group could be better educated and

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more cosmopolitan than the Jews, but they voted 88 percent Democratic.

Is it as easy as that Jews are especially well educated, and would incline to do the . . . intelligent thing?

No. The least educated (did not complete high school) voted mostly (64 percent) Democratic. But the college graduates voted 50-50.

Surely we can assume a correlation between income and political affiliation?

Once again: Not *quite*. The poorest (family income under $15,000) did indeed go Democratic (69 percent). Those with incomes between $75,000 and $99,999 also went Democratic, though narrowly (52 percent). Only in the highest bracket ($100,000 and over) did Republicans edge out Democrats, 52 to 48 percent.

Suppose we look in on the black voters. They are right there with the Jews, 89 percent Democratic to 11 percent Republican. Compare Hispanics, 70 percent Democratic to 30 percent GOP, and Asians, 62 percent Democratic, 38 percent GOP. Only whites gave more votes to Republicans, 52 to 48 percent.

Another presumed great divide, age. There is a division, but it is not as deep as the divisions along racial and ethnic lines. The young people (18–29) voted Democratic, by 61 percent. That Democratic plurality reduced to 54 percent for voters 30 to 59 years old; and to just a couple of points (52 percent) among those who have attained or are approaching senior citizenship.

So then, with a couple of exceptions (Jews, blacks, and Hispanics—oh yes, and gay, lesbian, or bisexual, who went 75 percent Democratic), you can get away with saying that the voters are pretty well mixed. This is so even geographically. The Democrats prevailed in the East by 64 percent, Midwest by 53 percent, and West by 56 percent. In the South, Republicans led by 54 percent.

You can pick and ponder as you will, with discrete findings, e.g., Catholics went 56 percent Democratic, Protestants 55 percent Republican. There presumably exists somewhere a table that gives you the progression of these different groups over the past 50 years. But if so, it is hard to find. We have walked back into see-no-evil land.

Minimum Wage vs. Free Markets

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 22

MS. PELOSI, the new Speaker of the House, has told us that she will call up as maybe the first order of business increasing the minimum wage.

Here are the relevant facts.

The federal minimum wage, enacted in 1938, was last raised in 1997. From that point on, with certain exceptions, you could not lawfully hire someone to work without paying him at least $5.15 per hour. Paying that much would yield $206 per week, or $10,712 per year. A different federal agency defines poverty as annual earnings of $9,827 or less for a single person. The mathematics of the above informs us that the existing federal minimum wage barely keeps a single worker out of poverty.

Of course, many states and localities have enacted higher minimum wages than the federal one. In San Francisco, you need to pay a worker $8.50 an hour; in New York State, $6.75; in Wisconsin, $5.70.

We learn that 60 percent of minimum-wage earners—two-thirds of them women—are working in restaurants and bars; 73 percent, by the way, are white, and 70 percent have high-school diplomas. Nearly 60 percent work part-time.

Now we can leech from these figures several observations:

1. It can be very difficult to tell what a minimum-wage worker is actually making. Many of those who work in restaurants and bars receive tips; then again, the minimum wage is substantially lower for people in that situation.

2. A high-school diploma will not in and of itself give the worker merchandisable skills o'erleaping the minimum wage.

3. Since there are part-time workers who receive only the minimum wage, a moment's reflection makes it obvious that they receive, by whatever means, income that makes life possible.

On the matter of what to do about it, we should begin by acknowledging that any argument for circumventing the market wage is sophistry. The market will tell you, even in San Francisco, what you need to pay in order to hire an hour's labor. But sophistry is sometimes in order. We do not allow child labor—except in certain circumstances: Peter Pan, at the local theater, is allowed to work even if he is only 12 years old.

Monopolies are not permitted to set prices. The idea is that in a free society, you must not tolerate any constriction in production. But again, sophistry is permitted, because many labor unions practice exactly that—a monopoly on the price of labor. What do we do about that? Exactly what we do about waiters who don't list their tips: We ignore it.

We learn that one individual American last year received compensation of $1.5 billion. This leads us indignantly to our blackboard, where we learn that the average CEO earns 1,100 times what a minimum-wage worker earns. What some Americans are being paid every year is describable only as: disgusting. But that disgust is irrelevant, in informing us what the minimum wage ought to be. The one has no bearing on the other.

We are bent on violating free-market allocations. Doing this is not theologically sinful, but it is wise to know what it is that we are doing, and to know that the consequence of taking such liberties is to undermine the price mechanism by which free societies prosper. Milton Friedman taught that "the substitution of contract arrangements for status arrangements was the first step towards the freeing of the serfs in the Middle Ages." He cautioned against set prices. "The high rate of unemployment among teenagers, and especially black teenagers, is both a scandal and a serious source of social unrest. Yet it is largely a result of minimum-wage laws." Those laws are "one of the most, if not the most, anti-black laws on the statute books."

Professor Friedman is no longer here to testify, but his work is available—even in San Francisco.

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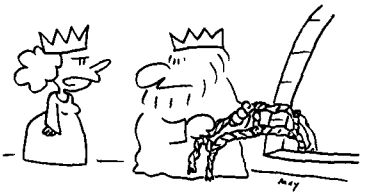

"A rope ladder? That's your idea of an exit strategy?"

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

A Terrible Tipping Point

WHATEVER the "realists" may say, nations talk to each other all the time. Unfortunately, when Nation A opens its mouth, Nation B doesn't always get the message, no matter how loud and clear it is. Syria and Iran, for example, have subverted post-Saddam Iraq for three years now. Rather quietly at first. But, like a kid playing gangsta rap in his bedroom, if there are no complaints, you might as well crank up the volume. So Iran began openly threatening genocide against a neighboring state. And Syria had one of its opponents in Lebanon, Pierre Gemayel, assassinated.

Syria and Iran are talking, but are we listening?

Likewise, Russia. These days, we talk to the Bear incessantly, to the point of holding the G8 photo-op on Vladimir Putin's turf. The old KGB man's pals are also back in the assassination game, not just in his backyard but in London, too. As do Syria and Iran, Russia spoke loud and clear: Alexander Litvinenko, a political opponent, was poisoned by the rarest of substances and left to die a lingering death across the pages of Fleet Street's newspapers in a very brazen and public way. Certainly as public as, say, Her Majesty the Queen making a visit to the Hermitage accompanied by President Putin and giving a speech on the renewed warmth of Anglo-Russian friendship. The British authorities, nominally charged with "solving" the murder of Mr. Litvinenko (who was, after all, a British subject), wish the whole business would just go away, so they can get back to holding talks and signing joint communiqués with Mr. Putin.

The question is: Which is the real snapshot of Russo-Western relations? The affable buddy-buddy kibitzing between Bush and Putin at the ranch in Crawford? One president looking deep into the eyes of the other and getting "a sense of his soul" (if you'll forgive a touch of geopolitical homoeroticism)? Or the liquidation of Moscow's enemies on foreign soil?

And, even when *we* don't get the message, plenty of third parties do. If you were a run-of-the-mill Third World basket case, what would you conclude watching the "international community" warn North Korea that there will be stern consequences if it conducts a nuclear test and, okay, even sterner super-duper-mega-consequences if it conducts a second nuclear test? If you were, say, the president of Sudan, to whom Iran has already offered its technology, you might reasonably posit that you too could go nuclear with impunity. So might Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. As for that brave band of foreign leaders who have been

Loud and clear

happy to identify themselves as American allies—the Kurds in northern Iraq, for example—that's not looking such a desirable club to belong to. As the great Bernard Lewis said of the Baker-Scowcroft betrayal of Iraqi rebels in the first Gulf War, the lesson was plain: America is harmless as an enemy and treacherous as a friend.

The danger in the years ahead is a kind of malign convergence. In Mexico during stops on the NATIONAL REVIEW cruise the other day, I wandered through the teeming streets and found myself thinking that if I were the jihad strategists I'd spend some serious Saudi-Iranian walking-around money in these cities and try to convert to Islam, oh, let's say just a modest 3–5 percent of Mexico's population. That would be more than enough to add a whole new wrinkle to the "undocumented" problem.

Speaking softly—as in State Department–softly—is fine if you're carrying the big stick. But, when your big stick is a snapped-off twig, it makes less sense. In a way, you've already spoken volumes. There are differences within the "Talks Now!" faction, from outright defeatists to those who figure a weak hand is better played round the poker table than in a fist fight. But for the most part "realism" is a euphemism for inertia. And too many "realists" have already accepted a nuclear North Korea, a nuclear Iran, a resurgent neo-totalitarian Russia, a reSyrianized Lebanon, a perceived American defeat in Iraq. The talks would be merely the signing ceremony.

In Britain in the Eighties, Margaret Thatcher faced a very particular problem. No matter how she and her colleagues transformed the country's economic fortunes, too many of the citizenry were unable to rouse themselves from post-war fatalism: They had come to believe in the irreversibility of British decline to the point that, even when the decline had been reversed, they were still mired in it. Britain, you'd hear, could never make a go of it in the world; it had no choice but to throw its lot in with a European ersatz-federation profoundly incompatible with British values. One hears it still.

In America today, we face the opposite problem. After 9/11, the president told the world: You're either with us or against us. Most of the world flipped him the bird. Some "allies," such as the Belgians and New Zealanders, said, "Actually, we're neither with you nor against you." Other "allies," such as the Saudis and Pakistanis, said, "Actually, we're both with you and against you. What you gonna do about it?" And, when it became obvious that there was no price to be paid for obstructing American aims, the world got the message.

Yet at home too many Americans are wedded to an absurd proposition: that somehow the lone "superpower" can choose to lose yet another war and there will be no consequences, except for Bush and sundry discredited "neocons"; that no matter how America stumbles in the world it can stay rich and happy and technologically advanced even as it becomes a laughingstock in Tehran and Damascus and Pyongyang and Caracas and Moscow and on, and on, and on.

Not so. We are on the brink of a terrible tipping point. **NR**

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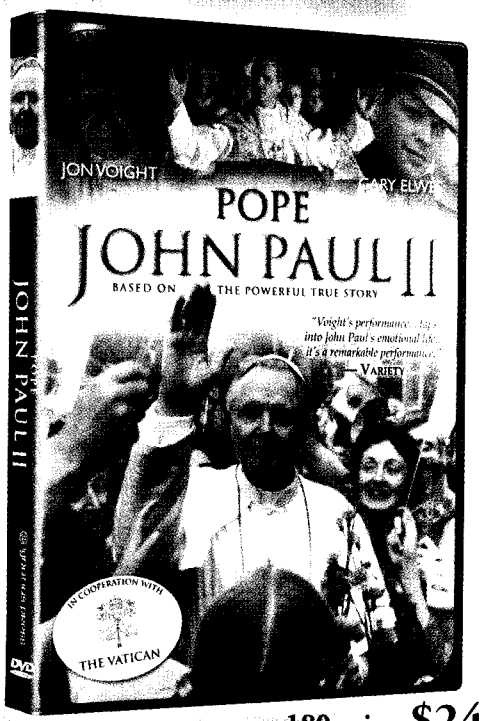

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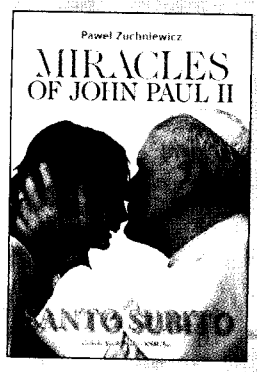

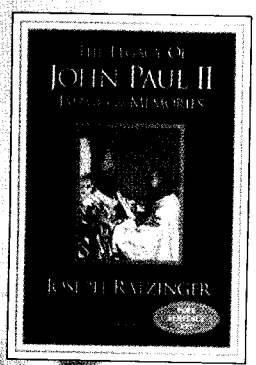

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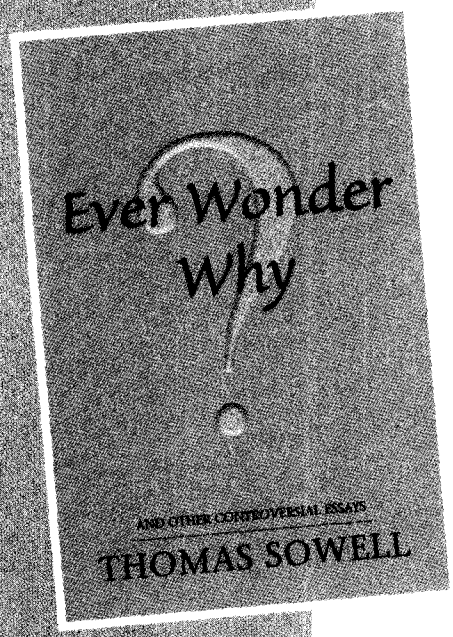

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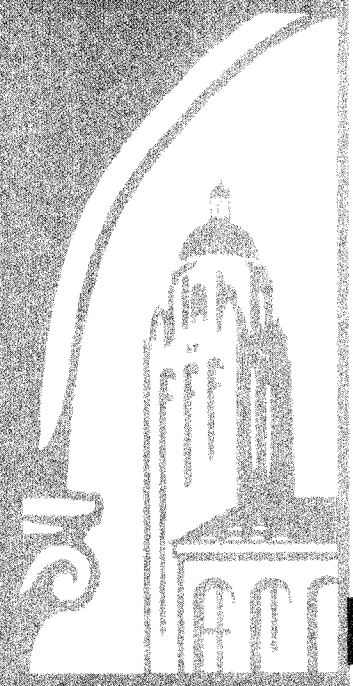

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